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The Young Woman's Guide to Excellence (Part Two)

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It is, my young friends, no *trifling* matter to have burning within a hearty desire for eternal progress. It is no small thing to do whatever our hands find to do, which it is fit that an intelligent being—one who belongs to the family of Christ—*should* do, in such a manner that it will contribute to the glory of God, and the good of mankind.

And yet less than this, as Christians or even as rational and immortal beings, we cannot do. I know, indeed, that many who profess to be the disciples of Christ, actually do less than this. I know there are hundreds and thousands who are called by his worthy name, and who seem to be almost above the liability to do that which could be regarded as positively wrong, who, nevertheless, are very far from striving to do everything which their hands find to do *with all their might*—or, in other words, as well as they possibly can. But it is to be hoped that the standard of Christian character will ere long be much higher than it is now.

It is of far less consequence *what* we do in the world, my young friends, than how well we do it. There is hardly a useful occupation among us, in which a person may not be eminently serviceable to himself and to mankind

There is hardly one in which we may not constantly improve ourselves. There is hardly one which will not afford us the means and opportunities of improving others. There is hardly an occupation which may not itself be essentially improved.

I do not mean to say there is no choice in occupations, either as regards pleasantness or usefulness. Nor do I mean to say, that neither parents themselves nor their children, are ever to consult their own natural preferences—their own likes and dislikes. All I aim at is, to convince the young—especially the young woman—that the old couplet,

> "Honor and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part, there all the honor lies"—

is not so very far from the truth, as many suppose; and that happiness, and even usefulness and excellence, are as little dependent on place and condition, as honor and shame.

A mercantile man with whom I was once acquainted, gave me, in few words, a very important lesson. He said he made it the rule of his life to do, in the best possible manner, whatever at any time seemed, as a subject of duty, to devolve upon him. No matter about

his own likes or dislikes—what appeared to be in the course of the dispensations of Providence allotted him for the day, he performed with all his heart. If he should conclude to pursue his present business for life, as the means of procuring a livelihood, this would be the very best course of preparation: if otherwise, it was the best under the circumstances; and especially was it the best state of mental and moral discipline with which he could be furnished.

To neglect the business before us because we are unhappy in it, or at least not so happy as we fancy we might be in some other employment, is to oppose the plans of Providence; nay, even to defeat our own purpose. It is to disqualify ourselves, as fast as we can, for faithfulness, and consequently for usefulness, in the employment we desire, should we ever attain to it. The wisest course is, to do what our hands find before them to do, provided it is lawful to do it at all, with all our might.

The best possible preparation a young woman can have for a sphere of action more congenial to her present feelings, is the one she now occupies. She has, at least, duties to herself to perform. Let these, as they recur, be performed in the best possible manner; and let

the utmost effort always be made to perform every thing a little better than ever she performed it before—if it be but the washing of a few cups, or the making of a bed. What her personal duties are, generally, need not now be said: first, because many of them are obvious secondly, because they will be treated of in their respective places. But it should ever be borne in mind, that there is nothing ever so trifling, which is worth doing at all, that may not be done better and better at every repetition of the act; and that there is no occupation which may not, in itself, be improved indefinitely.

Rising in the morning, devotion, personal ablutions, dressing, breakfasting, exercise, employments, recreations, dining, conversation, reading, reflection—all these, and a thousand other things which every one, as a general rule, attends to—may be performed in a manner to correspond more and more with the Scripture direction which has been illustrated.

There are, in respect to what I am now mentioning, two classes of persons in the world—of females as well as males; and they differ from each other as widely, almost, as the world of happiness from the world of misery. One of these classes lives to *receive;* is selfish—supremely

so. The other lives to *communicate*, more or less—to do good—to make the world around it better. The last class is benevolent.

A person of either class is not necessarily indolent or inactive; but the end and aim of the labors of one, are *herself;* while the other labors for God and mankind. The one procures honey from every flower—formed by other hands—but not a flower does she ever raise by the labor of her own hands, if she can possibly avoid it.

The one lives only to enjoy; the other, to be the continual cause of joy, like her Creator. The latter has a source of happiness within; the former depends for her happiness on others. Leave her alone, or amid a frowning or even an indifferent world, and she is miserable.

Would that I could reach the ears of that numerous class who are dependent on the world around them for their happiness—who never originated any good, and are becoming more and more useless every day! Would that I could make them believe that true happiness is not to be found externally, unless it first exist in their own bosoms! Would that I could convince them that the royal road to happiness—if there be one—is that which has been alluded to in the preceding paragraphs; in making all per-

sons and things around us better—in transmuting, as it were, under the influence of the gospel, all coarser things around us to "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

I long exceedingly to see our young women filled with the desire of improvement—physical, social, intellectual and moral. I long to see their souls glowing with the desire to go about doing good, like their Lord and Master. Not, indeed, *literally*, as I shall have occasion to say in another place. But I long to have their hearts expand to overflowing with love to the world for whom Christ died; and I wish to have some of the tears of their compassion fall on those over whom God has given them an amazing, and often an unlimited influence.

Could I hope to reach a dozen minds, and warm a dozen hearts, which had otherwise remained congealed, or at most received passively the little stream of happiness which a naked, external world affords them, without any corresponding efforts to form a world of their own—could I be the means of enkindling in them that love for everlasting progress towards perfection, which is so essential to the world's true happiness and their own—could I thus aid in setting in motion an under-current which

should, in due time, restore to us Eden, in all its primitive, unfallen beauty and excellence,—how should I be repaid for these labors!

I will dare to hope for the best. If I have the sacred fire burning in my own bosom, I will hope to be the means of enkindling it in the bosom of a few readers. If my own soul glows with love to a fallen world, I will dare to hope that a few, at least, of those whose souls are more particularly made for love and sympathy, will be led to the same source of blessedness.

CHAPTER V.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

Vast extent of the science of self-knowledge. Spurious self-knowledge. Knowledge of our physical frame—its laws and relations. Examples of the need of this knowledge. Instruments of obtaining it. The use of lectures. Study of our peculiarities. Study of mental philosophy. The Bible. How the Bible should be studied.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE is of the utmost importance to every human being. To no person, however, is it more important than to the young woman.

It is the more necessary to urge the importance of self-knowledge, from the fact that it is a species of knowledge which every one claims, and which she would deem it almost a reflection upon her character to be supposed not to possess; while it is that very knowledge of which almost every one, of both sexes, is exceedingly ignorant.

Such an one "understands himself," is deemed quite a compliment among our sex·

nor is it wholly disregarded by the other. But by this expression is too often meant no more than a knowledge of the petty acts and shifts, and I might say tricks, by means of which men and women contrive to pass current in the fashionable world. How much this kind of self-acquaintance is worth, is too obvious to need illustration.

I have represented a just self-knowledge as of very great importance; but it is a science of vast extent, as well as of vast importance. A thorough knowledge of one's self includes, first, a knowledge of man in general, in his whole character—compounded as it is—and in all his relations to surrounding beings and things; and, secondly, a knowledge of the peculiarities produced by particular circumstances, condition, mode of life, education and habits.

She who merely understands all the little arts to which I have alluded, which enable us to pass current with a fashionable and grossly wicked world, will find her self-knowledge exceedingly small, when she comes to compare it with the standard of self-acquaintance set up by such writers as Mason, Burgh, Watts, &c.; and, above all, when she comes to compare it with the standard of the Bible. How little, nay, how

contemptible will all mere worldly arts and shifts appear—things which at most belong to the department of manners—when she comes to understand her three-fold nature, as exhibited by the natural and revealed laws of Jehovah!

The subjects of Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene alone—and they teach us little more than the laws and relations of the mere body or shell of the human being—are almost sufficient for the study of a long life; and yet no individual can ever thoroughly understand herself without them: it is impossible. Anatomy shows us the *structure* of this body, which the Psalmist, long ago, taught us was fearfully and wonderfully made. Physiology teaches us the *laws* by which the living machine operates—is kept in play for seventy, eighty, or a hundred years; and Hygiene teaches us the *relations* of the living, moving human body to surrounding beings and objects. This, indeed, is a knowledge which few young women possess; and yet it is a knowledge which no young woman, who would do her utmost in the work of self-education, can dispense with.

She wishes, perhaps, to improve her voice by conversation, reading and singing. But is she qualified to do this in the best possible manner,

while she is wholly ignorant of the structure of the lungs, the wind-pipe, and the fauces, as they are called—parts so intimately concerned in the production of voice and speech?

She wishes, perhaps, to develope and invigorate her muscular system in the highest possible degree; but how can she do this, while she knows almost nothing of the nature or power of the muscular fibre?

She wishes to develope and cultivate her intellectual powers; to acquire "firmness of nerve and energy of thought." But how can she do it, if she is ignorant of the situation and functions of the cerebral and nervous system—that wonderful organ of the intellect?

She would train her eye in the best possible manner; but how can she do so, if she is ignorant of the nature and powers of that wonderful little organ? She would educate, properly, all her senses; but how can she do it, without a knowledge of their structure, functions and relations?

Perhaps she would study the philosophy of dress, and of eating and drinking. How can she do so, till she understands, intimately, the relation of the human system to air, heat, the various kinds of food, drink. &c.?

She would know, still further, the relation of body to mind, and of mind to body—of body and mind to spirit, and of spirit to body and mind. She would study the particular effect of one passion, or faculty, or affection, upon the body, or upon particular functions of the bodily system—and the more remote or more immediate effects of diseases of a bodily organ on mind and spirit. She must know all this, and a thousand times, yea, ten thousand times as much, before she is qualified to go far in the work of self-knowledge.

But she must go beyond even all this, and study her own peculiarities. It is not sufficient to understand the general laws and relations of the human economy; she must understand herself in her own individual character—physically, intellectually and morally. She must understand the peculiarities of her physical frame, of her mental structure, and of her spiritual condition—her relation to other spirits, particularly to the Father of spirits.

How amazing and how extensive—I repeat it—the science of self-knowledge! To be perfect in it we need the life of a Methuselah! But something may be done, even in the short period of seventy years. And if it be but little

that we can do in a life time, this consideration only enhances the value of that little.

Something, I have said, may be done in the short period of seventy years. But I might say more. Something may be done in a single day. And years are made up of days. A little done, every day, amounts to much in a whole year.

Let not the individual despair who can get but one new idea respecting herself, in a day. If she can sit down at quiet evening and say, I know something respecting myself which I did not know last night at this time, let her be assured the day is not lost. One idea a day is three hundred and sixty-five a year; and three hundred and sixty-five a year, amount, in seventy years, to twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty. There *are* those who can hardly be said, at seventy years of age, to have twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty ideas in their heads.

It is a matter of joy to every friend of self-knowledge, that so many means have been, of late years, devised to facilitate the study of this science. The lectures which have been given to both sexes on the structure, laws and relations of their bodily constitution, and the books which have been written, have made a con-

siderable change in the state of the public sentiment respecting this species of knowledge. For it is not they alone who have heard or read, that have reaped the benefit of hearing and reading on this subject. Many a parent or teacher, aware that such instructions and books were abroad, has been encouraged to the performance of that which she might not have dared to do, had nothing been said or done to encourage her.

Every young woman should, therefore, study these subjects for herself. Such books as those of Miss Sedgwick—her "Poor Rich Man, and Rich Poor Man," and her "Means and Ends"—will prepare the way, or will at least enkindle the desire, for the kind of knowledge of which I am speaking. She will then desire to read the works of the Combes, and perhaps, ere long, some of the other popular books of our day, which treat of Physiology and Hygiene. May I not venture to hope, that at an early stage of her progress, some of the chapters of *this* book will be found serviceable, as well as several other works I have prepared, especially the little volume called the "House I Live In?"

She who, having a hearty desire for improve-

ment in self-knowledge, on an extended scale, lets her years pass without looking into any of the volumes or treatises to which I have referred, can hardly be said to act up to the dignity of a Christian of the nineteenth century.

But it is not the physical department of her nature alone, that she who has the desire for self-knowledge and self-progress, should study. Such works as those of Mason on Self-Knowledge, Burgh on the Dignity of Human Nature, Watts on the Mind, Opie on Detraction and Scandal, Wayland on Moral Science, Skinner on the Religion of the Bible, &c. &c., should not only be perused, but carefully studied. It is to little purpose, that is, comparatively, that our physical nature is attentively and assiduously studied and cultivated, if it lead not to the more intimate and more earnest study of the immortal spirit.

In this better department—the spiritual—permit me, *once* more, to direct your attention to the Bible. It should be studied chiefly without note or comment. Your own good sense, brought to bear upon its simple, unstudied, unscholastic pages, accompanied by that light from on high which is ever vouchsafed to the simple, humble inquirer and learner, will

be of more value to you than all the notes, and commentaries, and dictionaries in the world, without it. It is a book which is most admirably adapted to the progress of all grades of mind—those which are but little developed, no less than those which are more highly cultivated. Other books speak to the intellect—to the head; this speaks to the heart. Other books often plead for human nature; this presents it just as it is—its perversity and deformity on the one side; its susceptibilities to improvement, its capability of excellency, on the other. Though it reveals to us our humble origin—the brotherhood of worms—on the one side, it unveils to us our relation to angels and archangels, on the other. Nay, more; it not only shows us our relation to the celestial hosts, and to Him who presides in their midst, but it points out to the penitent and the humble, the road which, through divine grace, will conduct them thither.

I have spoken of the study of the Bible without note or comment. Notes and comments, indeed, after you have made diligent use of all your own faculties and powers, and sought thereon the blessing of God's Spirit, have their use. I am exceedingly fond of them: and I

would not wholly deny to you what I am so fond of myself. The danger is, of leaning upon them too much. Scott, and Clarke, and Henry and Jenks, and Calmet, and Barnes, and Bush, may help to show me the true way of finding out and interpreting the Scripture for myself; but if I go farther, and either indolently or superstitiously suffer them to interpret it for me, it were almost better that I had not sought their aid. But the Bible, with or without notes, is—I repeat it—the great volume of self-knowledge which I urge you to study, and which, in comparison with all the books written by man, and even the great volume of nature herself, is alone able to make you wise to salvation.

It seems to me to have been too seldom observed, and still more seldom insisted on, how apt the love and study of the Bible are to awaken the dormant intellectual faculties, and to enkindle, even in the aged, a desire for general improvement. On this point, Mr. Foster, in his essay on Popular Ignorance, has some very striking remarks. In alluding to that great moral change which it is one object of the Bible to produce, and to the consequences which often immediately follow, he thus remarks:

"It is exceedingly striking to observe how the

contracted, rigid soul seems to soften, and grow warm, and expand, and quiver with life. With the new energy infused, it painfully struggles to work itself into freedom from the wretched contortion in which it has been so long fixed, as by the impressed spell of infernal magic."

This change in the moral and religious man, has been often observed; and Mr. Foster, therefore, tells us nothing very new, however striking it may be. But now for the secondary effect which is produced on the intellect, and, indeed, on the whole character:

"It (the soul) has been seen filled with a painful and indignant emotion at its own ignorance; actuated with a restless desire to be informed; acquiring an unwonted applicableness of its faculties to thought; attaining a perception combined of intelligence and moral sensibility, to which numerous things are becoming discernible and affecting, that were as nonexistent before. We have known instances in which the change—the intellectual change—has been so conspicuous, within a brief space of time, that even an infidel observer must have forfeited all claim to a man of sense, if he would not make the acknowledgment—This that you call divine grace, whatever it may

really be, is the strangest awakener of faculties, after all."

I have made this quotation, chiefly to confirm the sentiment I have advanced, that the love of the Bible and the religion of the Bible, actuates the soul with "a restless desire to be informed," and stimulates its faculties to thought, and fills it with pain and indignation at its own ignorance. This is the state of mind and heart which I would gladly encourage in the reader. It is the truest and best foundation of all progress, not only in self-knowledge, but in every other sort of knowledge which is valuable. Give me but this trait of character in a young woman, and I will not despair of her, however low may be her present condition, or how degraded soever may have been her former life. Give me but a hearty desire, a hungering and thirsting for improvement—physical, moral, intellectual, social and religious—and I will dare to believe that the most debased and depressed soul *may* be restored, at least in some good measure, to that likeness to Jehovah in which it was originally created.

One thing more, however, should be remembered. Not a few who really have within them the desire of improvement, and who mean to

make the Bible and its doctrines their standard, fail of accomplishing much after all. The reason is, they measure themselves, continually, by their neighbors. If they are no more ignorant or no more vicious than their neighbors—Misses S. and L., perhaps—or on the other hand, if they are as wise and as virtuous as Miss R.—they seem to rest satisfied. Or at any rate, if they make as much progress in the great path of self-knowledge, or do as much good in the world as the latter, they are anxious for no more, and settle down in inaction.

Now every such individual ought to know that the habit of measuring herself by others, in this way, will hang like a millstone about her neck; and if it do not drown her in the depths of ignorance and imbecility, will at least make her forever a child, in comparison with what she should be. It will keep her grovelling on the earth's surface, when she ought to be exploring the highest heavens. It will keep her a near neighbor to the sisterhood of worms on which she treads, when she ought to be soaring towards those lofty heights which Gabriel once traversed—nay, which he even now traverses—fast by the throne of the Eternal.

Let her not stop, then, to demean, and embarrass, and fetter herself by comparisons of herself with any thing finite. She has no right to do this. The perfection which the word of God requires, is the standard or measure by which she should compare herself. She may, indeed, sometimes compare herself with herself—her present self with her past self—provided it be done with due humility; but let her beware of measuring herself by others. Such a course is as perilous as it is ignoble and unprofitable.

CHAPTER VI.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.

Is there any conscientiousness in the world? How far conscientiousness should extend. Tendency and power of habit. Evils of doing incessantly what we know to be wrong. Why we do this. Errors of early education. False standard of right and wrong. Bad method of family discipline. Palsy of the moral sensibilities. Particular direction in regard to the education of conscience. Results which may be expected.

THERE is such a want of conscientiousness among mankind, even among those who are professedly good people, that one might almost be pardoned for concluding that there is either no conscience in the world, or that the heavenly monitor is at least no where fully obeyed. For is there not too much foundation for such a conclusion?

While truth compels us to admit that Christianity has already done much to awaken the consciences of men, we shall gain nothing by shutting our eyes to the vast influence it has

yet to exert, before mankind will become what they ought to be.

Most people are conscientious in *some* things. They may have been so trained, for instance, that they are quite tender in regard to the feelings of others, and even those of animals. There are many who, with Cowper, "would not enter on their list of friends the man who needlessly sets foot upon a worm," who are yet very far from possessing much real conscientiousness. Their feeling is better entitled to the name of *sympathy*.

I grant that many of these persons possess something more than mere tenderness or sympathy. Not a few of them are truly conscientious in what may be called the larger concerns of life—especially in external religion. They not only feel the force of conscience, but they obey her voice in some things. They would not fail to attend to all the outward rites of religion in the most faithful manner, on any account whatever; and if a failure should occur, would find their consciences reproaching them in the severest manner, for their departures from a known standard of duty.

These persons regard, with a considerable degree of conscientiousness, the law of the land

and the law of public opinion, or at least the law of fashion. In respect to any thing which would subject them to the severity of public remark, or which would even be regarded by the coarse, public eye, as glaringly inconsistent with their religious character, they are never wanting in sensibility. Their consciences reproach them, when they have done or said any thing which may cause them to be ill spoken of.

Thus far, it cannot be denied that there is a great deal of conscientiousness in the world. But beyond limits something like these, it is much more rare than many suppose. To say that it does not exist beyond such narrow limits, would be unjust; but it must be admitted that, taking the world at large, its existence is so rare, as hardly to entitle it to the name of a living, moving, breathing principle of action.

I do not suppose that young women are less conscientious than young men; nor that the young of either sex are less conscientious than their seniors. It would be a novel if not unheard of thing, to find the youth without conscience, merging, in due time, into the conscientious octogenarian. The contrary is the more common course.

And yet how few are the young women who make it a matter of conscience to perform every thing they do—the smaller no less than the larger matters of life—in such a way as to meet the approbation of an internal monitor. Do they not generally bow to the tribunal of a fashionable world? Do they generally care sufficiently, in the every day actions, words, thoughts and feelings of their lives, what God's vicegerent in the soul says about their conduct?—or if they *do* care, is it because it is right or wrong in the sight of God—or of *man?*

A due regard to the authority of conscience would lead people, as it seems to me, to yield obedience to her dictates on every occasion. They who disregard her voice in one thing, are likely to do so in others. Who does not know the power of habit? Who will deny that the individual who habitually disregards the voice speaking within, on a particular subject, will be likely, ere long, to extend the same habit of disregard to something else; and thus on to the end of the chapter, if any end there be to it?

No one, it is believed, will doubt that I have rightly described the tendency of habit in large matters. He who would allow himself to steal from day to day, unmindful of the voice within

which bids him beware, would not only, ere long, if unmolested, come to a point at which conscience would cease to reproach him, but would be likely to venture upon other kinds of wrong. I have seen those who would habitually steal small things, and yet would not tell a lie for the world. But I have known the habit of stealing continue till lying also gradually came to be a habit, and was scarcely thought of as offensive in the sight of God, or as positively wrong in the nature of things, any more than picking up a basket of pebbles. From lying, the natural transition is to profanity—and so on, till conscience, chased up and down like the last lonely deer of a forest, at length exhausted, faints and dies.

Few, I say, will deny the tendency and power of habit, in regard to the larger matters of life. But is it sufficiently known that every act which can possibly be regarded as fraudulent in the smallest degree, has the same tendency?

There are a thousand things that people do, which cannot be set down as absolutely criminal, in the view of human law, or human courts, and which are not forbidden in any particular chapter or verse of the divine law, which, notwithstanding, are forbidden by the spirit of both.

Human law, no less than divine law, requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Is the law obeyed when we make the smallest approach to taking that advantage of a neighbor, which we would not like to have taken of us in similar circumstances?

Those who admit and seem to understand the power of habit in larger matters, are yet prone to forget the tendency of an habitual disregard of right and wrong in small matters. They are by no means ignorant, that large rivers are made up of springs, and rills, and brooks; but they do not seem to consider that the larger stream of conscientiousness must also be fed by its thousand tributaries, or it will never flow; or once flowing, will be likely soon to cease. In other words, to be conscientious—truly so—in the larger and more important concerns of life, we must be habitually, and I had almost said religiously so, in smaller matters—in our most common and every day concerns.

Would that nothing worse were true, than that people of all ranks and professions, and of all ages and conditions, habitually, and with less and less compunction or regret, do that which they know they ought not to do, and leave undone that which they very well know ought

to be done. For they even seem to justify themselves in it.

> "I know the right, and I approve it too;
> I know the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue"—

is the language of many an individual—even of some from whom we could hope better things; and not a few charge it upon the frailty of fallen nature—as that nature now is—independent of, and in spite of their own efforts! Strange infatuation!

One way of solving this great riddle in human life and conduct—this incessant doing by mankind of that which they know they ought not to do, and neglecting to do that which they know ought to be done—may be found in the fact that so few are trained to regard, in every thing, the sacred rights of conscience. They are referred to other and more questionable standards of authority.

If you do so and so, you will never be a lady, says a mother who wishes to dissuade her young daughter from doing something to which she is inclined. If you behave so, every body will laugh at you, says another. If you do not obey me, I shall punish you, says a third. If you don't do that, I shall tell mother, says a young

brother or sister. If you do not do it, father will give you no sugar toys, when he comes home, the child is again told. If you don't mind me, the bears will come and eat you up, says the petulant nurse or maid-servant. Thus, in one way or another, and at one time or another, every motive—love, fear, selfishness, pleasure, &c.—is appealed to in the education of the young, except that which should be *chiefly* appealed to—viz., self-approbation, or the approbation of conscience.

This is not all. There is with many of these people no settled rule as to which sort of actions are to be the subjects of praise or of blame. A thing which must not be done to-day, on penalty of the loss of the forthcoming sugar toys, is connived at, perhaps with a kiss, to-morrow. All in the child's mind is confusion; she knows not what to do, were she as docile and as obedient as an angel of light. There is a long series of actions, words, thoughts and feelings, connected with right and wrong, of which nothing is ever said, except to forbid them, by stern and absolute authority. That one is good, and another bad, except according to the whim or fancy of the parent or teacher, the child never suspects.

Of this last class are almost all the actions of every-day life. The child alluded to is scolded, at times, for default in matters which pertain to rising, dressing, saying prayers, eating, drinking, playing, speaking, running, teazing, or soiling its clothes or books, and a thousand things too familiar to every one to render it necessary to repeat.

Perhaps she eats too much, or eats greedily; or she inclines to be slovenly, or indolent, or fretful. Now all these things are in general merely forbidden or *rated*, or at most, shown to be contrary to the will of the parents. They are seldom or never shown to be right or wrong, in their own nature; nor is the child assured, upon the authority of the parent, that there is a natural right or wrong to them. Thus, what is not implanted, does not, of course, grow. All the little actions and concerns of life, or almost all—and these, by their number and frequent recurrence, make up almost the whole of a child's existence—are, as it were, left wholly without the domain of conscience; and the young woman grows up to maturity without a distinct conviction that conscience has any thing to do with them.

And "what is bred in the bone," according

to a vulgar maxim, "stays long in the flesh." As is the child, so is the adult. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to make a person conscientious in all things, who has not been trained to be so. Hence the great difficulty in the way of making every-day Christians. Our religion is thought by some to have nothing to do with these ever-recurring small matters. And when we are told that we should do every thing to the honor and glory of God, although we may assent to the proposition, it is hard to put it in practice. There is a sort of moral palsy prevailing in the community—and that, too, very extensively.

No fatal error of early education could have seized more firmly, or palsied more effectually the moral sensibilities of the whole community, than this. And therefore it is certain that this is at least one principal reason why there is so little conscience in the world, and why it is so often a starveling wherever it is found to exist.

I have heard an eminent teacher contend with much earnestness, that there is a great multitude of the smaller actions of human life which are destitute of character—wholly so. They are, he says, neither right nor wrong. But if so, then is there no responsibility attached to

them; and, consequently, no conscientiousness required in connection with their due performance. But what, in that case, is to become of the injunction of a distinguished apostle, when he says, WHATEVER you do, do all to the glory of God? If every thing we do should be done to the glory of God, and not thus to do it, is to disobey a righteous precept, then there is a right and wrong in every thing. Now which shall we believe—the human teacher or the divine?

This origin of a common error, I have deemed it necessary for every young woman to understand, that she may know how to apply the correction, and where to begin. She should love and respect her parents, even if they belong to the class which has been described. She should consider the present imperfect state of human nature, and be thankful for the thousand benefits she has received at their hands, and the various means of improvement within her reach.

If she has drank deeply of the desire for improvement, and if she wishes to know and to reform herself as fast as possible, let her begin by cultivating, to the highest possible degree, a sense of right and wrong, and an implicit and unwavering obedience to the right.

Before closing this chapter, however, I wish

to present a few illustrations of my meaning, when I say that every thing should be done in a conscientious manner. Perhaps, indeed, I am already sufficiently understood; but lest I should not be by all, I subjoin the following.

Suppose a young woman is in the habit of lying in bed late in the morning. In view of her varied responsibilities and of the vast importance of rising early, and with a strong desire for continual improvement, she sets herself to change the habit.

Now to aid her in her task—for it is no light one—let her endeavor to consider the whole matter. God gives us sleep, she will perhaps say to herself, for the restoration of our bodies and minds; and all the time really necessary for this is well employed. But I have found that I feel better, and actually enjoy myself better, for the whole day following, when, by accident or by any other means, I have slept an hour less than I am accustomed to do. I usually sleep nine hours or more, whereas I am quite sure eight are sufficient for every reasonable purpose.

Moreover, if I sleep an hour too much, that hour is wasted. Have I a right to waste it? It is God's gift; is it not slighting his gift, to spend it in sleep? Is it not a sin? And to do

so day after day and year after year, is it not to make myself exceedingly guilty in his sight? One hour, daily saved for the purpose of reading or study, after a person has really slept enough, is equal, in sixteen years, to the addition of a full year to one's life. Can it be that I waste, in sleep, in fifteen or sixteen years, a whole year of time?

I must do so no longer. It injures my complexion; it injures my health; it is an indolent practice: but above all, it is a sin against God. I am resolved to redeem my time. And to aid me in this work, I am determined, if I fail in any instance, to remember this decision, and the grounds on which it was made.

She carries out her decision. She finds herself waking too late, occasionally, it is true. However, she not only hurries out of bed the instant she wakes, but recalls her former view of the sinfulness of her conduct. She is no sooner dressed, than she asks pardon for her transgression, and prays that she may transgress no more. This course she continues; and thus her convictions of the sinfulness of her former indolent habit and waste of time are deepened. At length, by her persevering efforts and the assistance of God, she gains the victory,

and a new and better habit is completely established.

Just so should it be with any other bad habit. Every young woman should consider it as a sin against God, and should begin the work of reformation as a duty, not only to herself and to others, but also and more especially to God. If it be nothing but the error of eating too much—which, by the way, is not so small an error as many seem to suppose—let her try to regard it in its true light, as a transgression against the laws of God. Let it be so regarded, not merely once or twice, but habitually. In this way it will soon become—as in the case of early rising—a matter of conscience.

The close of the day, however, is a specially important season for cultivating the habit of conscientiousness. Sleep is the image of death, as some have said; and if so, we may consider ourselves at bed-time, as standing on the borders of the grave, where all things should look serious.

The "cool of the day" is peculiarly adapted to reflection. Let every one, at this time, recall the circumstances of the day, and consider wherein things have been wrong. It was a sacred rule among the Pythagoreans, every

evening, to run thrice over, in their minds, the events of the day; and shall Christians do less than heathen?

The Pythagoreans did more than cultivate a habit of recalling their errors; they asked themselves what good they had done. So should we. We should remember that it is not only sinful to do wrong, but that it is also sinful to *omit to do right*. The young woman who fears she has said something in regard to a fellow being in a certain place, or in certain company, which she ought not to have said, as it may do that person injury, should remember, that not to have said something, when a favorable opportunity offered, which might have done a companion or neighbor good, was also equally wrong. And above all, she should remember, that both the *commission* and the *omission* were sins against that God who gave her a tongue to do good with, and not to do harm; and not only to do good with, but to do the greatest possible amount of good.

In short, it should be the constant practice of every one who has the love of eternal improvement strongly implanted in her bosom, to consider every action performed, during the day, as sinful, when it has not been done in the best possible manner, whether it may have been one

thing or another. As I have stated repeatedly elsewhere, there is nothing worth doing at all, which should not be done to the honor and glory of God; and she who would attain to the highest measure of perfection, should regard nothing as done in this manner, which is not done exactly as God her Saviour would have it done.

It is desirable not only to avoid benumbing or searing over the conscience, but that we should cultivate it to the highest possible tenderness. True, these tender consciences are rather *troublesome;* but is it not better that they should torture us a little now, than a great deal hereafter?

I have said that some good people—that is, those who are comparatively good—fall short in this matter. A young woman is a teacher, perhaps, in a Sabbath school. She knows, full well, the importance of attending promptly at the appointed hour; and she makes it a point thus to attend. At last she fails, on a single occasion—not from necessity, but from negligence, or at least from want of due care—and her conscience at once reproaches her for her conduct. But, ere long, the offence is repeated. The reproaches of her conscience, though still felt, have become less keen. The offence is repeated, again and again, till conscience is almost seared

over—and the omission of what had at first given great pain, almost ceases to be troublesome. And thus the conscience, having been blunted in one respect, is more liable to be so in others. Alas for the individual, who is thus, from day to day, growing worse, and yet from day to day becoming less sensible of it!

But there is a worse case than I have yet mentioned. A young woman has risen rather late on Sunday morning; and having risen late, other things are liable to be late. The hour for church is at length near; the bell is even ringing. Something in the way of dress, not very necessary except to comply with fashion, and yet on the whole desirable, remains to be done during the remaining five minutes; but what is more important still, the habit of secret prayer for five minutes before going to church, is uncomplied with. One of these, the closet or the dress, must be neglected for want of time. Does any one doubt which it will be? Does any one doubt that the dress will receive the desired attention, and that the closet will be neglected?

But does any one suppose that conscientiousness can live and flourish where it is not only not cultivated, but habitually violated, in regard to the most sacred matters? Secret prayer is

one of the most sacred duties; and they who habitually neglect or violate it, for the sake of doing that which is of secondary importance—knowing it to be so—are not only taking the sure course to eradicate all conscientiousness from their bosoms, but are most manifestly preferring the world to God, and the love and service of the world, to the love and service of its glorious Creator and Redeemer.

Let me say, in concluding this chapter, that if the conscience is cultivated from day to day, it will, in time, acquire a degree of tenderness and accuracy to which most of the world are entire strangers. There is, however, one thing more. Conscience will not only become more tender and faithful, but her *domain* will be much enlarged by the study of the Bible; and in many cases in which this heavenly monitor was once silent, she will now utter her warning voice. Conscience is not unalterable, as some suppose: she is susceptible of elevation as long as we live; and happy is the individual who elevates her to her rightful throne. Happy is the individual who sees things most nearly as God sees them, and whose conscience condemns her in every thing which is contrary to the divine will.

CHAPTER VII.

SELF-GOVERNMENT.

What self-government includes. Cheerfulness a duty. Discretion. Modesty. Diffidence. Courage. Vigilance. Thoughts and feelings. The affections. The temper. The appetites and passions.

THIS is so broad a subject that I shall present my thoughts concerning it under several different heads. It includes, in my estimation, the government of the THOUGHTS, the IMAGINATION, the TEMPER, the AFFECTIONS, and the APPETITES. The young woman who truly governs herself, will be at once *cheerful*, *discreet*, *modest*, *diffident*, *vigilant*, *courageous*, *active*, *temperate* and *happy*.

CHEERFULNESS.—Is cheerfulness within our power? some may be inclined to ask. I certainly regard it so. That there are moments of our lives—nay, even considerable seasons—when cheerfulness is not required, may, indeed,

be true. Our friends sicken and die, and we mourn for them. This is a law of our nature. Even our Saviour was, at times, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; though of all individuals in the universe cheerfulness was his right. But he bore more than his own sorrows; and in so far as his example is, in this respect, binding upon us, it is only when we bear the sorrows of others. Those should, indeed, often be borne; and in proportion as they are borne—in proportion as we are wounded for the transgressions, and bruised for the iniquities of others—it may not be possible for us to be continually cheerful.

As for our own sorrows—the sufferings, the pangs, the bereavements of our own existence—we should never cease to regard them, in some measure, at least, as the chastisements of an Almighty Father. Smitten friends, according to the sentiment of a distinguished poet, are messengers of mercy to us—are sent on errands full of love.

"For us they sicken, and for us they die."

We should be at least resigned, even under such chastisements, when we remember they are inflicted by a Father's hand.

But setting aside occasions of this kind, is there not a demand on our whole nature, for general cheerfulness? It is not only the "sunshine of the soul," but that of the body. The truly cheerful are not only happier in their minds and spirits, but also in their very bodies. The brain and nervous system play their part in the great drama of physical life better; the heart, and stomach, and lungs, work better. Indeed, all is better throughout.

Is not that a duty which is productive of so much happiness? But can that be a duty which it is not in our power to perform? It were surely an impeachment of the wisdom and goodness of God, did he require us, in his providence or in his word—by his natural or his revealed law—to do that of which we are incapable.

I consider cheerfulness, then, as a matter of duty; and, of course, as in a great measure in our power. It makes us happier ourselves; it enables us to reflect more happiness on others. I consider it especially as a duty of the young, who have it in their power to communicate happiness thereby in such large measure. Let them—let young women especially—strive to cultivate it. It is in its nature a perennial plant; and if it is not such at the present time,

it is because it has degenerated in a degenerate world. Let it be restored to its pristine beauty; and let the world thereby—in connection with other means tending to the same end—be restored to what it was before the loss of Eden.

Discretion.—This is a virtue with which, it is supposed by some, the young have little if any thing to do. I cannot assent to such an opinion. I believe that the young are to be trained in the way they should go; and as discretion is prominently a virtue of middle and later life, I deem it desirable that we should see at least the germs of it in the young.

Above all, do I like to see the young woman discreet. Discretion not only heightens the pleasures of her existence, but adds greatly to her reputation in the just estimation of the wise. Coupled with modesty, of which I am to speak presently, it more than doubles her charms.

Let discretion then be studied. Let it be studied, too, for its immediate as well as remote benefits. It will, indeed, bear fruit more abundantly in later life; but it will not be without its value in youth. It is a plant which it were worth while to cultivate, if human existence

were more frail, and life more uncertain of continuance than it now is.

Modesty.—Of all the qualities appropriate to young women, I know of none which is more universally esteemed than modesty. And what has been, by common consent, so highly esteemed, I cannot find it in my heart to undervalue. Indeed, I do not think it has ever been over-valued, or that it can be.

I have been somewhat amused—not to say instructed—by the following remarks on this trait of female character, from the pen of one who is not only a philosopher, but a physiologist.* They are not the more interesting, perhaps, because they are somewhat new; but neither are they less so. As I have nothing else to say on this topic, which has not been said a thousand times, I transcribe the more freely, the thoughts of the author to whom I refer.

"Modesty establishes an equilibrium between the superiority of man and the delicacy of woman; it enables woman to insure thereby for

* Alexander Walker, the author of several British works connected with the subject of physical education and physical improvement.

herself, a supporter—a defender. And while man thus barters his protection for love, woman is a match for his power; and the weaker, to a great extent, governs the stronger."

"It is probable that modesty derives its cause in woman, from a certain mistrust in her own merit, and from the fear of finding herself below that very affection which she is capable of exciting, and of which she is the object. * * * Modesty compels her love to assume that form by which nature has taught her so universally to express it—that of gratitude, friendship, &c. * * * Modesty is a means of attraction with which nature inspires all females."

Under this head I will just add, that since by modesty the weaker govern the stronger, it is of immense importance that woman should know the true secret of maintaining her power; and also by what means she is likely to jeopardize that power. And without undertaking to determine what shall be the precise rules of female action, and the precise limits of the sphere within which the Author of her nature designed she should move, is it not worth the serious inquiry, whether she does not, as a general fact, lose influence the moment she departs widely from the province which God in

nature seems to have allotted her; when, like a Woolstoncroft, or a Wright, or others still of less painful notoriety, she mounts the rostrum, and becomes the centre of gaping, perhaps admiring thousands of the other sex, as well as of her own. So did not the excellent women of Galilee, eighteen hundred years ago; although they were engaged, heart and hand, in a cause than which none could be more glorious, or afford a greater triumph, especially to their own sex. They probably knew too well their power, to endanger it thus in the general scale; or if not, they probably yielded to the impulses of a spirit which could direct them in a path more congenial to their own nature, as well as on the whole more conducive to their own emancipation, elevation and perfection.

Diffidence.—This trait, though nearly related to modesty, is far from being the same thing, its character having been more frequently brought in question than that of modesty. And yet it seems to me equally valuable. It gilds what modesty graces; and polishes what modesty improves.

Let not the reader confound modesty and bashfulness; for they are by no means the same

thing. Modesty is as much opposed to impudence as any thing can be; and yet it is certain that impudence is often conjoined with bashfulness. Not so often, to be sure, in the female sex, as in our own; and yet such a phenomenon is occasionally witnessed, even in woman.

Bashfulness is usually the result of too low an estimate of ourselves; whereas, true diffidence only leads us to value ourselves according to our real worth. Diffidence makes us humble, but bashfulness sometimes makes us mean; at least, there is danger of it. It is, at all events, of doubtful utility; and though I would not denounce or condemn it, I would urge the young to endeavor to rise far above it.

But I repeat it—I would endeavor to cultivate and encourage every thing which belongs to true diffidence. It will assist modesty in performing her angelic office; and the influence of both, united, may save from many a pang in this world, and perhaps prove a means, under God, of preventing the sentence of condemnation in the world to come.

Courage.—By courage I do not mean that trait for which man is constitutionally as much distinguished, as woman is for the want of it.

I mean not a courage to meet and surmount physical difficulties, and encounter outward and physical dangers. I mean, on the contrary, that moral courage which is neither confined to sex nor condition.

Not that physical courage is to be despised, even by females. On the contrary, I think it is a trait of character which is quite too much neglected in female education. It is not only lamentable, but pitiable, to see a female of twenty, thirty, or fifty years of age, shrinking at the sight of a spider, or a toad, even when there is not the smallest prospect of its coming within three yards of her. Nor is it as it should be, when a young woman, already eighteen or twenty years of age, has such a dread of pigs and cows, as to scream aloud at the sight of one in a field, so well enclosed that it is not possible her safety could be endangered were the animal ever so malicious. Such unreasonable and foolish fears ought by no means to be encouraged; on the contrary, she who finds herself a slave to them, ought to suppress them as fast as possible.

This is, indeed, an important but much neglected part of female education; and she who is a sufferer therefrom, will do well to derive a hint

from these pages. The unreasonable fears of which I speak, are by no means confined to the sight of toads, or spiders, or pigs, or cows. We find them more or less frequently, and in some form or other, in nearly every family. Some are unreasonably afraid of dogs and horses; others, of cats or snakes; others, again, of the dark, or of being alone by night or by day.

Let me not be understood as saying that no fears are to be indulged, in regard to any of these things; it is only an unreasonable and foolish degree of fear, that should be guarded against. A cow or a horse feeding quietly in a pasture, and separated from you by a stout fence, which no animal in any ordinary circumstances is wont to leap, is not a proper object of fear with a rational person over twelve years of age. If a cow or horse is running at large in the highway, and appears fearless of man, or furious, or if mad dogs are about, enough of fear may reasonably be indulged to keep you from the streets, and confine you to your home, unless you have suitable protection.

But as I have already said, it is *moral* courage that I would inspire in the young woman. She has patience, and perseverance, and fortitude—why then may she not add to these, moral cour-

age? What man has done, man may do—has been a thousand times said; and the remark is not less applicable to woman than to man. What woman has done, woman may do. But woman, in numerous instances, has possessed moral courage. She has been known, more than once, to "face a frowning world," or to oppose some of its tyrant fashions. I could mention more than one who has thus evinced true moral courage, and set her sex a glorious example, which not a few of my readers might do well to follow.

Let woman dare to do right—whether fashionable or unfashionable. Let her dare to do so in the smaller no less than in the larger matters of life. Let her dare to obey God, and the laws of God, both natural and revealed—both within and around her—rather than the laws of any man or set of men. Let her do this, and she will evince true moral courage; a courage as far surpassing the highest efforts of physical courage or prowess, as right surpasses might; virtue, vice; or purity, impurity.

VIGILANCE.—The young woman who truly understands and practises the art of self-government, will not only train herself to be at once

cheerful, discreet, modest, diffident and courageous; she will also be vigilant. The largest ship may be sunk by a very small leak; and in like manner, may the brightest and noblest character lose its lustre, unless the possessor is ever on the watch. Let not the most perfect individual on earth say, in the plenitude of his own power, and in the height of his own assurance—"My mountain stands strong. I shall never be moved." Such assurances of self-government and self-possession may be proper—of course are so—in Him who is in his own nature perfect and immutable—infinitely and eternally so; but not in a frail, mutable, created man or woman—above all, in the young and inexperienced.

Pardon me, then, youthful reader, when I repeat the Scripture cautions—"Be vigilant;" and "Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." It is easier to maintain the measure of self-government we have already attained, and even to add to it, than to recover what we have once lost.

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS.—On this account, set a guard over the very thoughts of your hearts. All sin begins in the desires of the

heart and the affections of the soul. There, in the deep recesses of the man, it germinates. Let every imagination, then, which exalts itself unduly, be brought low; and let the stream of thought and feeling be pure, and perfect, and holy. Acquire the exceedingly important habit of confining your thoughts and desires to those subjects which your judgment tells you are lawful and proper—and which are not only lawful and proper in general, but which are so at particular times and places. The wise man says there is a time and season for every thing; and more than intimates, that it is wisdom to confine every thing—thoughts and feelings, no less than words and actions—to their own place and time, respectively.

But to learn to think with *order*, is one exceedingly important item in the art of *governing* our thoughts. Half the thought in the world is of a mere random character. Men are but half men who have not yet attained to the government of their thoughts and feelings.

The Affections.—Even these, as I have already said, can be controlled. Were it not so, what meaning would there be in the gospel commands—so incessantly repeated by the divine

Author of the gospel—to love our *enemies?* On this subject—the regulation, and if I may so say, the application of the affections—I intend to dwell at greater length hereafter.

THE TEMPER.—Nothing is more unpleasant—slovenliness, perhaps, excepted—than a bad temper. I beseech every one who is so unhappy as to possess such a temper, to pay particular attention to what I am about to say, on this interesting and important topic.

Some young women seem entirely to overlook the consequences of an ill temper. These are numerous—too numerous to be mentioned in a single chapter. I shall only say here, that such a temper is no less destructive—in a slow way—to the health of the body, than it is to the mental faculties and the affections.

Some suppose their ill temper to be constitutional, and this serves them as an apology for neglecting to govern it. They seem to regard it as so wrought into their very structure, that it will hardly be possible ever to eradicate it. They are condemned by inheritance, as they appear to suppose, to a perpetual war within—in which the most they can hope for, is an occasional victory.

Now let me tell every young woman who has imbibed this erroneous and dangerous notion, that God has never suffered the command of her temper to be placed beyond her reach. She may acquire the most perfect self-command, even in this respect, if she will. Not in a moment, nor in a day, it is true. The work may be the labor of months, or of years. Still, the battle can be won: a permanent and final victory can be achieved.

The very general idea, that single persons somewhat advanced in life, especially females, become habitually impatient or ill tempered, has too much truth for its foundation, though it is by no means universally true. Nor is it ever necessary that it should be so, as I have endeavered to show elsewhere.

I wish every young person could be induced to study deeply the causes which operate on mankind to originate or perpetuate a bad temper. They are numerous—exceedingly so. It is not necessary to charge much upon our ancestors. The causes may much oftener be found within our own minds and bodies, would we but look for them there. We harbor or perhaps indulge a thousand unpleasant feelings from day to day, not seeming to know, or at

least to realize, that as small streams form larger ones, so these first risings of anger lead to its more out-breaking forms.

Not a few of the instances of irritability, fretfulness, impatience and melancholy, have their origin in physical causes—in errors in regard to exercise, sleep, air, temperature, dress, eating, drinking, &c.; and some have their origin in mistakes about the theory or the practice of religion. Some originate, too, in disappointed love. In short, their sources are well nigh endless.

THE APPETITES AND PASSIONS.—It is in vain, or almost in vain, to hope for any radical improvement in our physical, intellectual or moral condition, except in proportion as the body and the bodily appetites are kept in proper subjection to right reason and religion.

Here I must again urge upon every young woman the duty of studying the laws of health, and especially those of temperance. The knowledge thus to be obtained, would be of exceeding great value to her in the government of her passions and appetites.

Prof. Mussey, recently of Dartmouth College, in New Hampshire, relates, that a teacher in

Boston, whose general course of discipline was quite mild, was sometimes so much affected in his temper by high-seasoned or over-stimulating dinners, as to be petulant and passionate, even to blows, immediately afterward.

Now, whether this was often the case with the individual in question, I cannot say. This, however, I may affirm with the utmost safety and confidence—that many an individual who finds her passions or her appetites more than usually troublesome or rebellious, would do well to look for the cause in the bad air which she breathes, the bad food or drinks she uses, or in something else in herself or in her habits which might have been prevented.

Sometimes tea or coffee, notwithstanding their first effects to enliven, produce the results I have mentioned, as their secondary effects. Sometimes a hearty dinner of flesh meat, or a more moderate one, with bad accompaniments, or with improper seasonings, is the cause of trouble. Sometimes the cause is something either quite indigestible, or difficult of digestion, whether it be animal or vegetable. And, lastly, but yet most frequently of all, it may be excess of quantity, or the bad cooking of substances naturally wholesome and digestible.

I press this part of my subject upon the consideration of young women, because it concerns not them alone, but a host of others. No one liveth to himself, says an apostle; and the remark is quite as important in its application to the young woman, as to any other individual.

One reason why I urge it is, because we are almost universally referred to moral means and moral considerations alone, in order to keep in subjection the body—its passions and appetites—and seldom, if ever, to a proper attention to our food or our drink, our air, our exercise, or our sleep. Nay, the hopes of the young, in regard to keeping the body in subjection, are sometimes completely paralyzed by the grave assertion, that the strength of our passions and appetites is constitutional—as much our inheritance, as the color of our eyes, or the contour of our physiognomies, and almost equally unalterable.

Now I would encourage no young woman to expect too much of "temperance in all things," without the co-operation of the moral powers, and especially of the will. But I would encourage her to strict temperance, for her own sake, and that of others. I would say to her once more, that in proportion to her obedience

to the laws of health, in regard to air, exercise, sleep, temperature, study, food, drink, clothing, &c., &c., will be her ability to govern herself according to right, and reason, and the commands of the Creator. The simpler her diet, for example, and the more free it is from extraneous things—as fat, condiments, &c.—the easier will it be to keep herself in proper subjection to herself—the body to the immortal spirit.

One of the most powerful and ever active causes of that slavery of the soul to the body, which every person of sense must perceive and deplore, is our unnatural and artificial cookery. Had it been the aim of all the cookery in the world, to make it as bad as possible for the health of body and soul, I know not that things could have been worse than they are now. Very few things, indeed, are made more palatable, more digestible, or more nutritious by it—the legitimate and only ends of all the efforts of our fashionable cookery. On the contrary, they are made, almost universally, a great deal worse for us.

Let the young woman who would serve God in her day and generation, by doing good in the reformation, elevation, and eternal progress

of herself and those around her, not only study deeply the laws of health and life, but let her tax her powers of reasoning and invention, to see if it is not possible to remove the cause of so much mischief from our parlors, our sleeping-rooms, our kitchens, and our tables. Much must be done, in this respect, before the world can become what it ought to be; and woman must lead the way—woman of some future generation, if not of the present.

CHAPTER VIII.

SELF-COMMAND.

Presence of mind. Examples. Napoleon. Female example. Mrs. Merrill. Use of the anecdote. Self-command to be cultivated. In what manner. Consult the experience of others. Consult your own reason and good sense. Daily practice in the art of self-command.

I WAS, at first, disposed to call this chapter Presence of Mind; but for various reasons, I have chosen to call it by another name—that of Self-Command.

To acquire the art of properly commanding ourselves, in all circumstances—especially in the most trying emergencies, and at a moment of danger, when not a minute, perhaps not a second, should be lost—is as difficult as it is important to every person; and to none perhaps more so, than to young women. Not that their trials of this sort will be more frequent than those of other people; but because the usual course of their education is such as to prepare

them but poorly to meet those which fall to their lot.

It is said that Napoleon was greatly distinguished for the trait of character of which I am now speaking. But there are also numerous examples of self-command in females on record. I will relate one.

Some thirty or forty years ago, when the Indians had not yet done making depredations on the inhabitants of our then frontier states, Kentucky and Ohio, a band of these savage men came to the door of a house in Nelson county, Ky., and having shot down the father of the little family within, who had incautiously opened the door, they attempted to rush in and put to death the defenceless and unoffending mother and her children. But Mrs. Merrill—for that was the name of the heroic woman—had much of that self-command, or presence of mind, which was now so needful. She drew her wounded husband into the house, closed the door and barred it as quickly as possible, so that the Indians could not enter at once, and then proceeded to the defence of "her castle," and all those in it whom she held dear.

The Indians had soon hewed away a part of the door, so that they could force themselves in,

one by one, but not very rapidly. This slow mode of entrance gave time to Mrs. M. to despatch them with an axe, and drag them in; so that before those without were aware of the fate of those inside, she had, with a little assistance from her husband, formed quite a pile of dead bodies within and around the door; and even the little children, half dead though they at first were with fear, had gradually begun to recover from their fright.

The Indians, finding their party so rapidly disappearing, at length began to suspect what was their fate, and accordingly gave up their efforts in that direction. They now attempted to descend into the house by way of the chimney. The united wisdom and presence of mind of the family was again put in requisition, and they emptied upon the fire the contents of a feather bed, which brought down, half smothered, those Indians that were in the chimney, who were also soon and easily despatched. The remainder of the party, now very much reduced in numbers, became quite discouraged, and concluded it was best to retire.

I have not related this story because I suppose any of my readers will ever be tried in this particular manner. Many of them, however,

may be placed in circumstances exceedingly trying; and their lives and those of others may depend on a little presence of mind.

Suppose, now, that Mrs. M., instead of dragging her wounded husband into the house and fastening the door, had stood still and screamed; or suppose she had fainted, or run away; what would have been the result? We do not know, it is true; but we know enough of the Indian mode of warfare to see that no condition could well be more perilous.

It cannot be denied that the large share of nervous sensibility which is allotted to the female constitution, peculiarly unfits woman for scenes of blood, like that to which I have alluded. And yet we see what can be done, as a last resort.*

But if most females were fitted for trying emergencies, as I doubt not they could be, how much better they could meet the more common accidents and dangers to which human exist-

* Some persons object to the detail of such a scene of murder as this, even as an illustration of an important principle. They dislike to present such things to the youthful mind; and so do I. But it should be remembered that this book is not for mere children, but rather for young women; and is therefore less objectionable than if it were written for persons much younger.

ence is daily more or less liable. And ought they not to be thus fitted?

Do you ask how it can be done? This is precisely the question I should expect would be asked by those who have a strong desire for improvement. It is a work that is at present chiefly left undone, both by parents and teachers. and yet hundreds of lives are lost every year for the want of it; and hundreds of others are likely to be lost in the same way every year for many years to come, unless the work is taken up as a work of importance, and studied with as much zeal as grammar, or geography, or botany, or mathematics.

It is a most pitiable sight to see a young woman, twelve, fifteen, or it may be eighteen years of age, left to take care of a babe, suffer its clothes to get on fire by some accident, and then, without the least particle of self-command, only jump up and down and scream, till the child is burnt to death; or what perhaps is still worse, rush out for relief, leaving the door wide open to let through a current of air to hasten the work of destruction.

Equally distressing and pitiable is it, to see females, young or old, losing all presence of mind the moment a horse takes fright, or a gale

of wind capsizes the vessel in which they are travelling, and by their erratic movements, depriving themselves of the only opportunity which remains to them, of saving themselves or of assisting to save others.

But the question recurs—How can these evils be prevented? In what way can our young women be taught—or in what way can they be induced to teach themselves—the important art of commanding themselves, on all occasions, and in all emergencies?

An aged but excellent minister of the gospel with whom I had the honor and the pleasure of being intimately acquainted, once said, that the only way of being prepared for the sudden accidents of life—by being able to keep cool, and possess our souls in peace—was to think on the subject often, and consider what we would do, should such and such accidents occur.

Thus we should consider often what we ought to do, if a horse in a carriage should run away with us; if we should awake and find the house on fire over our heads—what to be done, if we were in this room or in that, &c.; if our clothes should take fire; if we should be burnt or scalded—what to be done, if scalded with water, and what, if with milk, oil, or any other sub-

stance;* if a child should fall into a well, be kicked by a horse, be seized by convulsions, or break or dislocate a limb, &c.

It will be asked, I know, of what avail it is to think over and over what should be done, without the instructions, either of experience or science. But we can have these instructions, to some extent, whenever we seek after them. The great trouble is, we are not in the habit of seeking for them; and what we do not seek, we rarely, if ever, find.

There are around every young woman, those whose judgment is worth something in this matter. It is not always the old—though it is more generally such. There are those who live in the world almost half a century without learning any thing; and there are also those who become wise in a quarter of a century. The wise, whatever may be their age, are the persons for you to consult; and the older such

* A very small portion of chemical knowledge is sufficient to teach any person that the falling of a quantity of boiling oil or fat on any part of the body, will cause a deeper and more dangerous burn, than the same quantity of boiling water applied in the same manner; and consequently, will require very different treatment. Water boils at 212 degrees of Fahrenheit; oil at about 600.—I have entered more minutely into this subject in my work entitled "The Mother in her Family," chapters xxiv. xxv. and xxvi.

persons are, the better—because the greater is likely to be their wisdom. The truly wise, are always growing wiser; it is the fool alone who remains stationary. Wise and observing friends will probably tell you—or at least relate anecdotes to you, from which you may gather the conclusion—that when the clothes of a child have caught fire, you may often smother the flame by wrapping him instantly in a thick woollen blanket:—that it is seldom entirely safe to open the doors into an adjoining room—at least without great caution—when the house which we are in is discovered to be on fire; but the best way, as a general rule, is, to escape by the scuttle, if there be one, or by a ladder, or by letting ourselves down to the ground, if the distance is not too great, through the windows. This last is often the best way, though not always the most expeditious one. Many sleep with a rope in their bed-rooms to tie to the bed-post, as a means of letting themselves down, should there be occasion; while others rely on the bed-clothes—to make a rope of them by tying several articles together.

But it was no part of my purpose, in this work, to direct to the appropriate methods of saving ourselves or our friends from harm, in

case of accidents or emergencies; but only to point to the subject, and leave the reader to pursue it. The intelligent young woman who sets about gaining the habit of self-command, will not only consult the experience of others, but observe, and reflect, and reason on the case, herself. She will often originate plans and means of escape, in places and circumstances of danger, which she would not gain from others in a hundred or a thousand years.

There is one other means of improvement in the art of self-command, on which I do not know that any writer on the subject has dwelt with much earnestness. And yet it is as plain and simple as can be. It is to make the most of every little accident or emergency that actually overtakes or surprises us. I know from personal experience, that a great deal may be done in this way. There are those who, though they were formerly frightened half out of their senses, at the sudden sight of a harmless snake, have brought themselves, by dint of long effort, to so much presence of mind, as only to start a little at first—and to be as calm, and composed, and self-possessed, in a few seconds afterward, as if nothing had happened. And the same presence of mind may be obtained in other

surprises or emergencies. Besides, she who is learning to command herself at sight of a snake or a dog, is at the same time acquiring the power to command herself in any other circumstances where self-command may be necessary.

I wish the principle indicated by the last statement were more generally perceived. I wish it were distinctly understood, that what we want is, to gain the habit of self-command in all circumstances, rather than to be able to work ourselves up to a proper state of feeling in particular cases; and that this habit is to be acquired by frequent familiar conversation on the subject, and by daily practice in the continually recurring small matters of life. It is, indeed, in governing ourselves in these small matters—which recur so frequently, and are regarded as so trifling as to have not only no moral character in themselves, but no influence in the formation of character—that the art to which I am now directing your attention, is to be chiefly acquired. They who defer the work till some larger or more striking emergency arrives, will not be likely to make much progress; for they begin at the wrong end of the matter. They begin exactly where they ought to end.

CHAPTER IX.

DECISION OF CHARACTER.

Decision of character as important to young women as to others. Why it is so. Illustration of the subject by a Scripture anecdote. Misery and danger of indecision. How to reform. Perseverance. Errors of modern education.

THIS trait of character has been recommended to young men too exclusively. I know of no reason why it is not equally important to young women, and equally becoming the sex in general. One thing, at any rate, I do know; which is, that thousands of young women—and the world through their imperfection—suffer, in no trifling degree, from the want of this virtue.

I call it a *virtue*. What is there that produces more evil—directly or indirectly—than the want of power, when occasion requires it, to say YES, or NO? As long as with half the human race—and the more influential half, too—*no* does not mean *no*, and *yes* does not mean *yes*, there will be a vast amount of vice,

and crime, and suffering in the world, as the natural consequence. And is not that which is the cause of so much evil, nearly akin to vice? And is any thing more entitled to the name of virtue, than its opposite?

Let me illustrate my meaning by a Scripture example. When Balak, the king of Moab, undertook to extort a curse upon Israel, from Balaam, the latter did not say *no;* but only said, the Lord would not permit him to do what was required. He left neither to Balak nor to his messengers, any reason to conclude that his virtue was invulnerable. On the contrary, as the event plainly shows, his answer was just such a one as encouraged them to prosecute their attempts to seduce him.

Now it is precisely this sort of refusal, direct or implied, in a thousand cases which might be named, which brings down evil, not only upon those who make it, but upon others. They mean *no*, perhaps; and yet it is not certain that the decision is—like the laws of the Medes and Persians—irrevocable. Something in the tone, or manner, or both combined, leaves room to hope for success in time to come. "The woman who deliberates, is lost," we are told: and is it not so? Do not many who say *no*

with hesitancy, still retain the power and the disposition to deliberate? And is it not so understood?

It is—I repeat it—a great misfortune—a very great one—not to know how and when to say NO. Indeed, the undecided are more than unfortunate; they are very unsafe. They who cannot say *no*, are never their own keepers; they are always, more or less, in the power and at the command of others. They may form a thousand resolutions a day, to withstand in the hour of temptation; and yet, if the temptation comes, and they have not acquired decision of character, it is ten to one but they will yield to it.

Is it too much to say, that half the world are miserable on this account,—miserable themselves, and a source of misery to others? Is it too much to say, that decision of character is more important to young women than to any other class of persons whatever?

But as it is in every thing or almost every thing else, so it is in this matter: they who would reform themselves, must begin with the smaller matters of life. The great trials—those of decision no less than those of other traits of human character—come but seldom; and they

who allow themselves, habitually, to vacillate, and hesitate, and remain undecided, in the every-day concerns of life, will inevitably do so in those larger matters which recur less frequently.

No one will succeed in acquiring true decision of character, without perseverance. A few feeble efforts, continued a day or two, or a week, are by no means sufficient to change the character or form the habit. The efforts must be earnest, energetic, and unremitted; and must be persevered in through life.

I am not ignorant that many philosophers and physiologists have denied that woman possesses the power of perseverance in what she undertakes, in any eminent degree. A British writer, distinguished for his boldness, if not for his metaphysical acuteness, maintains with much earnestness, that woman, by her vital organization, is much wanting in perseverance. This notion may or may not be true. Certain it is, however, that she has her peculiarities, as well as man his. But whether she has little or much native power of perseverance in what she undertakes, is not so important a question, as whether she makes a proper use of the power she possesses.

"Who does the best his circumstance allows,
Does well; acts nobly: angels could no more."

We are required, however, to do that *best* which "circumstance" *does* allow, as much as is the highest seraph; and woman is not the less bound to persevere in matters where perseverance would become her, because her native power of perseverance is feeble, if indeed it *is* so. On the contrary, this very fact makes the duty of perseverance to the utmost extent of the means God has put into her hands, the more urgent—especially as *small powers* are apt to be overlooked.

There is one habit which should be cultivated, not only for its usefulness in general, but especially for its value in leading to true decision of character. I mean, the habit of doing every thing which it devolves upon us to do at all, precisely *at the time* when it ought to be done. Every thing in human character goes to wreck, under the reign of procrastination, while prompt action gives to all things a corresponding and proportional life and energy. Above all, every thing in the shape of decision of character is lost by delay. It should be a sacred rule with every individual who lives in the world for any higher purpose than merely

to live, never to put off, for a single moment, a thing which ought to be done immediately—if it be no more than the cleaning or changing of a garment.

When I see a young woman neglecting, from day to day, her correspondents—her pile of letters constantly increasing, and her dread of putting pen and thoughts to paper accumulating as rapidly—I never fail to conclude, at once, that whatever other excellent qualities she may possess, she is a stranger to the one in question. She who cannot make up her mind to answer a letter when she knows it ought to be answered—and in general a letter ought to be answered soon after it is received—will not be likely to manifest decision in other things of still greater importance. The same is true, as I have said already several times, in regard to indecision in other things of even less moment than the writing of a letter. It is manifest especially in regard to the matter of rising in the morning. She who knows it is time to get up, and yet cannot decide to do so, and consequently lies yawning a little longer, "and yet a little longer still," can never, I am bold to say, while this indolence and indecision are indulged, be decided in any thing else—at least, habitually.

She may, indeed, be so by fits and starts; but the habit will never be so confirmed as to be regarded as an essential element of her character.

Nearly all the habits of modern female education—I mean the *fashionable* education of the family and school—are entirely at war with the virtue I am endeavoring to inculcate. It would be a miracle, almost, if a young woman who has been educated in a fashionable family, under the eye of a fashionable mother, and at a fashionable boarding school, under the direction of a teacher whose main object is to please her patrons, should come out to the world, without being quite destitute of all true decision of character. If it were the leading object of our boarding schools to form the habit of indecision, they could not succeed better than many of them now do. They furnish to the world a set of beings who are any thing but what the world wants, and who are more likely to do almost any thing else, than to be the means of reforming it.

CHAPTER X.

SELF-DEPENDENCE.

Fashionable education. Why there is so little self-dependence in the world. Why orphans sometimes make out well in the world. Error corrected. What young women once were. What they are now. The best character formed under difficulties. Cause of the present helpless condition of females. Three or four to get breakfast. Modes of breaking up these habits. Anecdote of an independent young woman. Appeal to the reader.

HERE, again, our fashionable modes of education are wrong; and here, too, almost every young woman who is determined on improvement, has a great work to perform.

It is one of the most difficult things in the world—perhaps it is one of the impossibles—to bring up children amid comforts and conveniences, and yet at the same time to cultivate in them the habit of self-dependence—or, as some would call it, the habit of independence.

And yet nothing is more true, than that human character has always, with few if any

exceptions, been most fully developed and most harmoniously and healthfully formed, amid difficulties. Mr. M'Clure, the distinguished geologist, whose opportunities for observation in the world have been very great, says that orphans, as a general rule, make their way best in the world. Without claiming for myself so many years of observation, by thirty or forty, as this distinguished veteran in natural science, I should be glad to make one modification of his conclusion, before adopting it as my own. I would say, that the misfortune of having no parents at all, is scarcely greater than that of having over-indulgent ones; and that the number of those who are spoiled by indulgence, is greater than the number of those who are spoiled by being made orphans.

It cannot be that an institution ordained by Heaven as one of its first laws, should so completely fail in accomplishing its design—that of blessing mankind—as Mr. M'Clure represents. It cannot be that parents, as a general rule, are a misfortune. Such a belief is greatly erroneous.

The truth is, that when we look about us and see so many spoiled, who appear to be well bred, our attention is so exclusively directed to

these strange, but, in a dense population, frequently occurring cases, that we begin, ere long, to fancy the exception to be the general rule. And again, when we see here and there an orphan—and in a population like ours, quite a multitude in the aggregate—making her way well in the world, we are liable to make another wrong conclusion, and to say that her success belongs to the general rule, when it is only an exception to it.

Nevertheless—and I have no wish to conceal the fact—it is extremely difficult, if not dangerous, to attempt to form good and useful character in the lap of ease and indulgence. There needs privation and hard struggle, to develope the soul and the body. Even Zion, the city of our God, is represented in Scripture as recruiting her inhabitants only by throes and agonies.

Let it not be thought, then, that our young women in New England—a land of comparative ease, quiet and affluence—can be brought up as they ought to be, without much pains-taking. A century ago, things were, in this respect, more favorable. Then there were struggles; and these were the means of forming a race of men and women, of whom the world might have

been proud. Then the young women knew how to take care of themselves; and having been taught how to take care of themselves, they knew how to take care of others.

But "times are altered." Thousands of young women—and the same is true of young men—are trained from the very cradle, scarcely to know any thing of want or difficulty. All is comparative ease, and comfort, and quiet around them; and they are led by ease and indulgence to love to have it so. They are trained, as I have elsewhere said, to depend on the world and its inhabitants for their happiness—not to originate happiness and diffuse it. They are trained, in effect, to believe that happiness, or blessedness, consists—contrary to the saying of our Lord and Saviour—in *receiving;* not in *giving*.

The time *was*, I say once more, when most young women, if thrown by the hard hand of necessity upon their own resources, could yet take care of themselves. No matter how great their poverty or affliction—how large or how deep their cup of adversity or trial—they would, in general, struggle through it, and come out as gold seven times refined. Mothers left with large families of helpless children, and with no

means of sustaining them but the labor of their own hands, and daughters left without either parent, would wind their way along in the world, and the world be both the wiser and the better for their influence.

Now, on the contrary, mothers and young women left destitute, are apt to be, of all beings, except the merest infants of the former, the most helpless.

This applies to even a large portion of what are called the poor. In reality, however, we have no poor—or next to none. Our very paupers are comparatively rich. They dress, and eat, and drink, and *dwell* like princes. How, then, can they be so very poor?

It is true, that nearly all of our young women are trained to something in the shape of labor. Very few, indeed, are trained to positive indolence. But what is their labor, generally speaking? A little sewing, or knitting, or embroidery; or still worse, in circumstances of poverty or peculiar necessity, a life of spinning, or weaving, or braiding; or some other mechanical occupation which has no tendency to prepare them for true self-dependence.

I have said we have little poverty existing among us. Is it not so? Is not the life of

young women in the great mass of our New England families, very far removed from any feeling of want or suffering?

But though not trained in real indigence, they might be trained to self-dependence. They might be, and always ought to be, trained to make their own beds; make and mend their own garments; make bread; and, in fact, to attend to the whole usual routine of duties involved in the care of themselves and a family. But is it so? Are not all these things done, to a vast extent, either by servants, hired girls, or the mother? And if the mother employs her daughters in assisting her, is it not apt to be just so far as is *convenient to herself*, and no farther? In short, who can often find the individual mother or daughter, who considers hard work, and care, and obstacles, and difficulties—such as all the world acknowledge are required in order to form good and useful character—as any thing but task work and drudgery—a curse, and not a blessing, to mankind?

True it is—and greatly to be lamented—that many of our young women are not well able, for want of physical vigor and energy, to encounter poverty, and hardship, and obstacles, and suffering. But this deteriorated condition

of female character in New England, is owing, in no small degree, to the very kind of education—miseducation, rather—of which I am now complaining. Would mothers do their duty—could they do it, I mean, in the midst of abundance—the state of things would be very much altered for the better.

It is not uncommon in the schools of Europe, especially the female schools, to assign to each older pupil the care of some younger one, for whom she is more or less responsible, particularly as to behaviour. This leads, in no small degree, to self-effort and self-dependence; and might be practised in families as well as in schools, with equally good effects.

But there is another course which is better still, in many respects. It is not unusual in our New England families, where there are several daughters, when they are employed at all—I mean about household concerns—to have them all employed at the same thing at once. Thus, if breakfast is to be prepared, all are to engage in it. One goes this way, another that, and another that; and it sometimes happens that they cross each other's path and come into actual conflict. One goes for one thing, another for another, and so on; and it is not

uncommon for two or three to go for the same article.

That three or four females may thus spend all their time for an hour or more in getting breakfast, when one alone would do it much more quietly and a great deal better, and in little more time than is occupied by the whole of them, is not the worst of the evil. The great trouble is, that no one is acquiring the habit of self-dependence. On the contrary, they are acquiring so strong a habit of doing things in company, that they hardly know how to do them otherwise. True, there is pleasure connected with this sort of dependence—and most persons are exceedingly fond of it; but the question is whether it is useful—and not whether it is or is not pleasurable.

Is it best for young women to become so much accustomed to *assist*, merely, in cooking, and in performing other household offices, as to feel, even at thirty years of age, as if they could do nothing without the aid of others?

I hardly know what a young woman is to do, who finds herself in the dependent condition of which I have been speaking. The habit is not very likely to be broken, so long as she remains in the place where it was formed. I have, how-

ever, seen such a habit successfully broken up, in one instance; and perhaps it may be useful to relate it.

A young friend and neighbor of mine, in a family where there were several young men of nearly the same age, happening to find out the evil of doing the smaller work of the morning and evening in this company manner—that what was "every body's business," in the language of a common maxim, "was nobody's"—resolved on a change. He accordingly proposed to his companions to take turns in doing the work. One was to do it faithfully—the whole of it—for a month; another for the next month; and so on. The plan succeeded most admirably. Each became accustomed to a degree of responsibility; and each began to acquire the habit of doing things independently, without the aid of a dozen others.

Perhaps this method might be generally introduced into families, as it has already been, in substance, into some of our boarding schools. It is at least worth while for a young woman who perceives her need of such an arrangement, to attempt it. To be suddenly required to make a batch of bread, or wash the garments, or cook the victuals of a household, and to feel, at

twenty years of age, utterly at a loss how to perform the whole routine of these familiar household duties, must be both distressing to herself and painful to others.

Of course it is not desirable to see our young women all orphans, and brought up as domestics, for the sake of having them brought up in such a way as to be good for something,* instead of being the poor dependent beings they too commonly are; yet it were greatly to be desired, that without the disadvantages of orphans at service in families, they could have the energy and self-dependence of such persons.

Allow me to relate, for your instruction, a few anecdotes respecting an individual, who was, to all intents and purposes, an orphan, but who was, nevertheless, more useful in life, and

* Nor can I wish to see young women trained to do the "buying and selling," instead of men, in order to give energy to their character; although I do not doubt that such a course is often successful. It is related by Mr. Ennis, a highly credible traveller, that in Bali and Lombok, two islands lying eastward of Java, the females do all the buying and selling, even to the amount of thousands of dollars. "This probably gives," he says, "to the whole race of people a portion of that boldness and energy for which they are a little distinguished." But then, as he very honestly adds, it gives the women somewhat of a masculine character—a thing which should not by any means be encouraged.

more truly happy, than a hundred or a thousand of some of those passive mortals who float through life on the streams of abundance, without feeling the agitation of tide or current, and only discover the misery of such a course when they fall into the gulf of insignificance.

This individual had been abandoned by one of her parents very early in life, and had been also early separated by poverty from the other. She had lived in various families, and had been compelled to hard labor, and sometimes to menial services. At length she married a person as poor as herself, though not so independent. He had been bred in the midst of ease; and was, consequently, indolent. But she was determined on "going ahead" in the world; and her ambition at length roused her husband.

The latter now engaged in hard labor, by the day or the month, among his neighbors; while the wife took care of the concerns at home. This continued for fifteen or sixteen years, before their joint labors procured land enough for the husband to work on, at home. In the mean time, however, they had a number of children; and the mother's cares and labors of course increased. For several of the first of these years, the husband was seldom at home to

assist or encourage her, in the summer, except during the Sabbath and occasionally at evening; so that though this diminished the labor of cooking, it left her with her children wholly on her hands, and a great deal of unavoidable labor, such as washing and ironing. The latter work she did for her husband, as well as for her children and herself: and it was therefore an item of considerable moment—especially as she was obliged to bring water for this and all her domestic purposes. in pails, the distance of twenty-five or thirty rods, a part of the year, and of ten rods or so, the other part; besides which, she had to pick up much of her wood, for the six summer months, in the woods nearly a quarter of a mile distant, carry it home in her arms, and to cut it for the fire-place. Added to all this, was the labor of *brewing* once or twice a week; for in those days, when poverty denied cider to a family, the beer barrel was regarded as indispensable.

Nor were her domestic concerns, properly so called, her only labors. She spun and wove cloth for the use of her family, besides weaving for some of her neighbors. She also spun and wove a great deal of coarse cloth, at shares; and thus purchased a large part of the smaller

necessaries of the family, and not a little of the clothing.

She continued this course, I say, something like fifteen years. Never, to my knowledge, unless she was actually sick, did she receive any assistance in her labors—not so much as a day's work of washing. And yet under all these disadvantages, she reared—almost without help even from the children themselves, as the difference between the oldest and the youngest was only about eight years—a family of four children.

I have sometimes wondered how she accomplished so much, by her own unaided efforts. But the whole secret lay in her power of self-dependence. She could do every thing alone. She had been trained to it. She was truly independent; as much so, perhaps, as a female can be in this world.

I might have added, that notwithstanding these incessant labors, I have often known her walk four or five miles to church on the Sabbath, and home again in the same manner; that she was neat and orderly; and that she found much time to read and converse with her children, and for social visiting.

Reader, I do not ask you to imitate this veteran matron; for it would be too much to

ask of any individual in any age, especially the present. But I ask you, and with great earnestness, to acquire the power of self-dependence—and to do it immediately. Make it a matter of conscience. Bear constantly in mind, that whatever *has* been done, *may* be done. Shame on those who, knowing the value of self-dependence, and having the power to acquire it, pass through life so shiftless, that they cannot do the least thing without aid—the aid of a host of relatives or menials. It is quite time that woman should understand her power and her strength, and govern herself accordingly. It is quite time for her to stand upright in her native, heaven-born dignity, and show to the world—and to angels, even; as well as to men—for what woman was made, and wherein consists her true excellence.

CHAPTER XI.

REASONING AND ORIGINALITY

Females not expected to be reasoners. Effects of modern education on the reasoning powers. Education of former days, illustrated by an anecdote of an octogenarian. Extracts from her correspondence. Difficulty in getting the ears of mankind. The reasoning powers in man susceptible of cultivation indefinitely. Reflections on the importance of maternal effort and female education.

I KNOW not why a young woman should not reason correctly as well as a young man. And yet I must confess that, some how or other, a masculine idea seems to be often attached to the thought of strong reasoning powers in the female sex. To say of such or such a young woman, She is a bold and powerful reasoner—would it not be a little uncommon? Would it be received as a compliment? Would it not be regarded as a little out of the way—and, to coin a term, as rather unfeminine?

Perhaps the habit of boldly tracing effects up to their causes, and of reasoning upon them,

is a little more uncommon among the young misses of our boarding schools and our more fashionable families, both of city and country, than among those of the plainer sort of people. Certain it is, at all events, that the former would be regarded as reasoning persons with much more reluctance than the latter. And yet the former has probably been taught mathematics, and all those sciences which are supposed to develope and strengthen the mental faculties, and give energy to the reasoning powers.

For myself, I have many doubts whether we are really—whether the sex themselves are, I mean—so much the gainers by the superficial knowledge of modern days, which tends to the exclusion, in the result, of that good old fashioned education to house-work, which was given by the mothers of New England, in the days of her primitive beauty and glory. Then were our young women, for the times, reasoning women; then were they good for something. A few of those precious relics of a comparatively golden age, have come down nearly to our own times. I have even seen several of them since the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is one of this description, more than eighty years of age, now living with a son

of hers in one of the Middle States. Her sphere of action, however, in the days of her activity, lay not there, but on one of those delightful hills which are found at the termination of the Green Mountain range, in New England. There, in her secluded country residence, among plain people, and with only plain means, with her husband absent much of the time, she educated—not instructed, merely, nor brought up at school, but educated—a large family of children, most of whom live to bless her memory and the world. So devoted was this woman to her household duties, and to the right education of her family, that for eleven of the first and *hardest* years of her life, she never for once left the hill on which she dwelt—a mile or so in extent.

And yet this female was a woman of reasoning powers superior to those of most men. She understood, thoroughly, every ordinary topic of conversation, and could discuss well any subject which came within her grasp. She has been for a few years past, one of my most regular and most valued correspondents; and nothing but her great age and great reluctance to put pen to paper, would, I presume, prevent her from writing more frequently than she is

accustomed to do. As a specimen of her style, I venture to insert a paragraph or two from her letters. The first was written when she was in her eightieth year.

"I am glad to find you in the enjoyment of health—able to be busily and usefully employed for this and coming generations. I would like, if it was God's will, to be usefully employed in *such* ways, too; but though I am so greatly favored as to be able to *think* as well as ever, I cannot work with my wonted facility and despatch. I cannot 'labor with my hands,' so as to have 'to give to him that needeth,' because my hands are weak and lame. Once I could fill six sheets of letter paper in a day, without weariness; but now, if I can fill this sheet, decently, in *two* days, I am ready to boast of it, as an achievement. When I look back and see my former activity, I wonder if that *was myself*, and am almost ready to doubt my identity. But every thing in its course; first rising into life, then decaying. The world itself is not to stand forever; and of course the things animate and inanimate which are upon it, must partake of its transitoriness."

Again, when she was within a few weeks of eighty years of age, (which was in January,

1838,) she wrote to me in the following vein of playfulness:

"As I can invent nothing new, I must utter such truisms as I have picked up by the way, in almost eighty years; for you say to me, *write*—and of course I obey, and scribble on. Now I say to *you*—and may I say it to Mrs. A. too?—WRITE. Write very sensibly, by the way; for old as I am, I am a sharp critic. I read in my early days Lord Kaimes' Elements, and I have been working up these elements ever since; and if I cannot *invent*, I can understand what is fairly presented to me: so you will receive this as a caution. But don't be afraid! I'll tell you another thing, of which perhaps you are not aware: I had rather have one letter warm from the heart, than a dozen from the head."

"I was delighted to think you were pleased with my philosophy—for I never dreamed I uttered any. As to my politics, I was pretty well drilled in the school of Washington, after seeing through the revolutionary struggle; and that was no mean school, I assure you. Washington was a statesman! I see but *few* now; but when I do see one, I make him my best courtesy. And as to my theology, I learned that from the pilgrim fathers."

Now whether those of my younger readers of a new generation, who, perhaps, almost despise both letter writing and reasoning,—whether any of these, I say, will see either form or comeliness—any thing inviting—in these paragraphs, I cannot say. But I can tell them, at once, that *I* do; and it sometimes seems to me, that no greater human benefaction could be offered to mankind, than the application of those principles and methods of female education, in family and school, which would produce such minds and bodies as those of which we have, in the case of this aged woman, an example!

Perhaps, however, it is almost useless to hope for better times, at present, for reasons, among others, which are given in another place by my aged correspondent. "The mischief now-a-days," she says, "is, that every one is on a railroad, impelled by steam power, and cannot stop; so all speak at once, and none hear. What a state is this! But it is true of the world in general. I see but few who are self-possessed. I wonder when I see any one who is so; and I wonder if I am so myself."

But we are not only unwilling to stay to hear—we are unwilling to stay to teach. It would be no hard matter for parents and teach-

ers—especially by beginning early—to establish in the young of both sexes, habits of right reasoning. I am afraid, however, that parents and teachers themselves do not perceive the value of such a habit, and that they are not likely to do so for some time to come.

All, however, which remains for me to do, I must do. This is, to press upon the few whose ear I can gain, the importance of this part of self-education. Do not despise the idea of reasoning on subjects which come before you; nor think it masculine or old fashioned. Not only accustom yourselves to reason, but to reason on every thing. There is almost as great a difference between a young woman who takes all things upon trust, scarcely knowing that she can use her own powers in the investigation of truth, and one who has been, like my worthy and venerable correspondent, in the habit of observing and reasoning seventy or eighty years, as there is between a Sam Patch and a Bowditch—or a Hottentot and a Newton. Would that our young women knew this, and would conduct themselves accordingly!

There is nothing in the wide field of human improvement which better repays the labor of cultivation, than the reasoning powers. Nor is

there any thing which does more to perfect and adorn the human being. With the highest and noblest rational powers, the human family—especially the female part of it—seems to me to accomplish least happily the great work for which they were created, than any other earthly existences. The little all of knowledge which pertains to the lower animals, "flows in at once," says Dr. Young; whereas, "were man to live coeval with the sun, the patriarch pupil might be learning still, yet dying, leave his lessons half unlearnt." And yet the former fill, happily, the sphere which God in nature assigned them; while the latter, with all his capacities and powers of reason, conscience, &c., wanders incessantly from his orbit, and must be a most unsightly spectacle to God and holy angels, and all other high and noble intelligences. When will man return to his native sphere, and the moral and intellectual world move in due harmony and happiness, like the physical? When will each moral creation of the Divine Architect, move round its great spiritual centre, with the same beauty, and majesty, and glory, which is manifest in the motions of the physical world? Never, I am sure, till mothers and teachers, who are, as it seems, the

authors alike of human happiness and human misery, come up to their appropriate work; and never will there be such mothers, till young women are better trained. And the latter will never be better trained, till the work of education, especially of self-education, is undertaken with much better views of its objects and ends, and with a thousand times more earnestness and perseverance, and I might even say *enthusiasm*, than has as yet been manifested.

CHAPTER XII.

INVENTION.

Why woman has invented so few things. Abundant room for the exercise of her inventive powers. Hints. Particular need of a reform in cookery. Appeal to young women on this subject.

Is it not strange, that in a world where have been sought out—time immemorial—so many inventions, so few should as yet have been originated by woman?

What have the inventive powers of woman accomplished, even within what have been usually regarded as her own precincts? Has she invented many special improvements in the art of house-keeping? Have the labors of knitting, sewing, making, mending, washing, cooking, &c., been materially facilitated, or rendered more effective, by her ingenuity? Has she done much to advance the important art of bread-making towards perfection?

Why has she not done more? Is genius con-

fined to our sex? Nay, is there even no common ingenuity out of the range of our own walks? Has not the young woman, when she begins the world, the same mental faculties, in number and kind, with the young man? How happens it, then, that the world is filled with inventions, and so few of them originated by woman?

There is a wide range for improvement in that department of human labor which has usually been confined to the female sex—especially in the department of *infant education.* Nor is there any department in which invention would tell with so much efficiency in the cause of human happiness, as in that. Let our young women consider this; and let them resolve on inventing something in their own particular sphere, which shall turn to the general account.

When I speak of the appropriate sphere of woman, and of her taxing her powers of invention there, I would by no means indulge myself in any narrow or circumscribed views in regard to her field of operation. I should have no sort of objection to the application of her inventive powers to the work of facilitating the usual labors of the other sex—particularly in the departments of agriculture and horticulture.

But I do not perceive any necessity for this. I believe there is work enough—profitable and philanthropic work, too—to task woman's powers of invention for many centuries, without her going out of her appropriate sphere. In the art of cookery especially—which certainly has a great deal to do with physical education and physical improvement—there is great room for the exercise of her inventive powers. This important art is, as yet, entirely in its infancy; and where any progress has been made, it has been chiefly in a wrong direction, and under the guidance of wrong principles. Be it yours, young women, to give this matter a right direction, and to bring it to bear as efficiently on the happiness of mankind, as it has hitherto on their slow destruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION.

Advice of Dr. Dwight. Other counsels to the young. Some persons of both sexes are always seeing, but never reflecting. An object deserving of pity. Zimmerman's views. Reading to get rid of reflection. Worse things still.

"KEEP your eyes open," was the reiterated counsel of a distinguished theologian, of this country—the late Dr. Timothy Dwight—to a young student of his; and it was, in the main, very wholesome advice. And in so far as it is wholesome for young men, I do not see but it is equally so for young women.

"Your countenance open, your thoughts close, you will go safe through the world"—was the advice of another individual, of less eminence, to a young friend of his; and did it not savor a little too much of selfishness, and perhaps of concealment, it would, like the advice of Dr. Dwight, be worthy of careful consideration. It does not partake quite enough

of the gospel spirit and sentiment—"As a man hath received, so let him give." It encourages us to get wisdom, but not to communicate it.

I have said that the advice of Dr. Dwight was, in the main, wholesome. The only objection that can be made to it is, that it gives no encouragement to reflection. Some may suppose it to mean, that observation, or *seeing*, is every thing. Now there are those who appear to see too much. They *always* have their eyes open. They are never satisfied otherwise. They absolutely hate all reflection.

Of this description of persons—I am sorry to say it—our young women furnish a full proportion. Not a very small number of the female sex are so educated, that it is quite painful for them to turn the current of their thoughts inward:—they will do almost any thing in the world, not absolutely criminal, to prevent it. It cannot, indeed, be quite said, that they observe too much; but it is perfectly safe to say, that they see too much. If they should see much less with their eyes, and the soul were left to its own reflections, the result would be, no doubt, exceedingly happy. Solitude is as necessary as action; and to both sexes.

No person is more pitiable than the individual of either sex—and such individuals are by no means scarce in our own—who cannot be easy unless perpetually running to see some new sight, or, like the Athenians of old, to hear or to tell some new thing; who is no where so happy as when in company, and no where so miserable as when alone.

Zimmerman, in his work on Solitude—a pleasant book, by the way, notwithstanding its gloomy name—has some very appropriate and useful remarks on the advantages of being by ourselves a part of the time, as a means of improvement. Should any of my young readers be sorely afflicted with the disease I have just mentioned—a dread of themselves, or of their own thoughts, rather—I beg them to read Zimmerman. But read him, if you read him at all, very thoroughly.

Some persons read solely to get rid of reflection. Worse than this, even; some persons read, work and play—and I had almost said, go to church, and put themselves in the attitude of prayer and praise—to get rid of themselves and their reflections. Who will show us any good thing? is their constant cry: not, Who will lead us, by external agencies, or by any other

means, to sound and useful reflection. Who will show us ourselves? is a cry which, among the young women of New England, as well as those of most other countries, is too seldom heard.

The best advice I can give to such persons—next to that given in the Sermon on the Mount, where they are directed to enter into their closet—is, to read with great care, or rather to study, Watts on the Improvement of the Mind. That is a work which has probably done as much good in the way of which I am now speaking, as any book—the Bible excepted—in the English language.

CHAPTER XIV.

DETRACTION AND SCANDAL.

Universal prevalence of detraction and slander. Proofs. Shakspeare. Burns the poet. Self-knowledge, how much to be desired. Reference to the work of Mrs. Opie—to our own hearts—to the Bible.

LET it not be supposed, for one moment, that I consider young women as more generally in the habit of detraction than other people; for I venture on no comparisons of the kind. All I presume to take for granted is, that they are often exceedingly faulty in this respect, and need counsel and caution. Were there any doubts on the latter point, one would think they might very readily be removed by reading the excellent work of Amelia Opie, entitled, "Detraction Displayed; or, a Cure for Scandal."

This detraction or scandal is so common every where in life, that multitudes are addicted to it without the shadow of a suspicion that they are so. Thousands and thousands of young

women whose hearts would recoil at the bare recital of deeds of butchery and blood—nay, who would faint at the sight of the severities, not to say cruelties, which, under the guise of parental discipline, or on the plea of authority, are often and hourly inflicted on the bodies of young and old—who will yet rob and murder their unoffending neighbors. For there is no little truth in what Shakspeare says so pungently—

> "Who steals my purse, steals trash; 't is something, nothing;
> 'T was mine, 't is his, it may be slave to thousands:
> But he that filches from me my good name,
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed."

Nor is there less of truth in what the evangelist says, that "whoso hateth his brother" (and does not a slanderer *hate?*) "is a murderer."

I know it may seem harsh to fasten on any class of the community, and above all, on the young of either sex, the charge of robbery or murder. But is it not proper that the truth should be told? And if there is such a propensity in us to competition in its varied forms, that not only thoughts but words of detraction are, as it were, forever on our thoughtless tongues and lips, and we will not, though often

warned, set a guard over the latter, is it not right that we should be represented as the robbers of reputation? And if there is such a disposition to try to be first in the community, and to compel those around us to take the second place—the lower seat—as generates envy and hatred—the *seeds* of murder—is it not right to warn the young of their danger? And when we find them callous to our representations of the truth—when we find their hearts almost as unmoved as the firm rocks they tread on, notwithstanding our most faithful exhibitions of human depravity, as is evinced by the slander, the detraction and the calumny which every where prevail, and which many must see, as in a glass, to prevail in their own bosoms, while yet their very blood recoils at the tales of imaginary wo from the pen of Bulwer, or some other novelist of kindred fame—is it not proper to remind people of what the evangelist says of hatred, that it is murder?

Burns, the poet, sought some power who would bestow on us the gift "to see ourselves as others see us." Poor Burns! this was as high as he could be expected to go. But how much more to be desired is it, that we could see ourselves as *God* sees us? Not indeed at

once, lest the very sight should sink us, forthwith, into everlasting night; but by degrees, rather, as we may be able to endure it.

How much to be desired is it, I say, especially by the young, that we might see how prone we are to enter into competition, particular or general, with the community; and how apt we are, with almost every breath, and in almost every conceivable form, to throw the good character, and merits, and success, even, of others into the shade. How can those whose young hearts beat high in anticipation of a good name, even in this world, be willing to jeopardize their character by the commission of so much meanness!

I need not enter into particulars, especially when the invaluable work of Mrs. Opie is before the world. Let me refer those who entertain doubts whether, after all, I am not among the very sort of detractors whom I am censuring with so much severity—and whether, what I complain of in the individual, as abusive on here and there a neighbor or acquaintance, I am not pouring, by wholesale, and with a spirit not a whit better, upon a whole community,—let me refer all such, I say, to that invaluable work. Let me also refer them to themselves.

I am sure no one can carefully examine and analyze her own most secret feelings without discovering in herself the spirit of detraction in some form or other, if it be only in the form of genteel slander, envy or discontent. If there be those who do not find it so with themselves, and who say that however it may be with others, they are not thus circumstanced or thus guilty, I pity them most sincerely, as grossly ignorant of themselves. Such persons I have only and lastly to refer to that volume of Divine Truth, which assures us that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; and which asks, with the most pertinent significance, not to say eloquence—WHO CAN KNOW IT?

CHAPTER XV.

THE RIGHT USE OF TIME.

Great value of moments. An old maxim. Wasting shreds of time. Time more valuable than money. What are the most useful charities. Doing good by proxy. Value of time for reflection. Doing nothing. Rendering an account of our time at the last tribunal.

On this subject—the right use of time—sermons, not to say volumes, without number, have been written; and yet it is still true, as an eminent poet has well said, that the individual "is yet unborn who duly weighs an hour."

But my business is not so much to dwell at large on the value of time in its larger divisions, such as days and hours, as to urge, in the first place, an attention to moments. "Take care of the pence," says an old but just maxim, "and the pounds will take care of themselves;" and it is somewhat so in regard to time. Take care of the moments, and the hours and days will take care of themselves.

Not, indeed, that hours and even days are not wasted, and worse than wasted; but the great error is, in disregarding the value and slighting the use of those smaller fragments of which hours, days and years are made. Show me the individual, young or old, who sets any thing like a just value on moments of time, and you will show me the person who values, in a proper manner, its larger divisions.

I have ventured upon this hackneyed subject, because I have often thought that young women—more, if possible, than most other young persons—need to be reminded of the unspeakable importance of moments. It is only a minute or two, many will say, or seem to say; and so they let time pass unemployed. But these leisure moments are frequently recurring; and the more they are slighted and wasted, the more they will be. And what is worse, she who frequently says, It is only a minute—and who makes this serve as an apology for wasting it—will soon extend the same apology to much larger portions of time. The current of human nature is ever downward: let those who love improvement and desire to be improved, remember it is so; and let them ever be mindful, in this respect, of their danger.

There are thousands who suffer themselves to waste shreds of time which might be applied to the attainment of knowledge—valuable knowledge—or to the work of doing good in a world where so much good needs to be done, who would not be willing to waste the smallest sum of money. I would not speak lightly of the habit of wasting money; but it must be admitted by all, that she who wastes, without remorse of conscience, her precious moments which might be usefully employed—if not in action, at least in conversation, or reading, or reflection —and yet would not, on any account, waste a cent of money, is justly chargeable, in a moral point of view, with straining out a gnat, and swallowing a camel.

For it should never be forgotten, that however valuable money may be, time is much more so. It is much more so, even as a means of doing good. There are very many persons, it is true, who seem to think otherwise. They seem not to think that they can do good with any thing but money.

Let us reflect, however, that no charity is more truly valuable, than visiting and aiding the sick, encouraging the depressed, instructing the ignorant, &c. Now is not she who does the

latter, more sure of doing good than she who only gives the former? In the latter case, she bestows the very thing which is truly needful; in the former case, she only bestows that which is a means of doing good. These means may or may not be properly applied; of this the donor cannot be certain. But when, instead of giving money or doing good by proxy, she does it herself, the work is done, and done in her own way: and if not done well, she is responsible. She is not made, in that case, responsible for her neighbors.

But is *all* time wasted that is not spent in action, as some of my remarks might seem to imply? By no means. I have already spoken, in this chapter, of the use of time for reflection; and in a preceding one, have dwelt more especially on the value of solitude at certain seasons. What I mean to urge is, the folly of trifling away time in absolutely doing nothing. There is a sort of listlessness—or, perhaps, more properly, reverie—in which many indulge, which is as sinful as it is unprofitable; and there are modes of thinking and subjects of thought, which are, to say the least, unworthy of a rational, intelligent and immortal spirit.

I am not sure that there are not times—very short seasons, I mean—during our waking hours, even with those who are in tolerable health, when we best serve God and our fellow men by doing absolutely nothing at all. I am not sure, I say, that this may not be the case. Still, if it is so, we should be exceedingly careful not to run into excess in this respect—an error which seems to be almost inevitable. For one who spends too little time in doing nothing, it is believed a thousand spend too much in this way. And let it never be forgotten, that not only for every idle word, but for every misspent moment, we are, according to Scripture, to render an account in the day when God will judge the secrets of each heart, according to the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

How valuable—how immensely valuable—will a few, only, of those moments which we now let slip with so much readiness, appear to us in that great day! What would we not then give for them? Five minutes here, spent in listlessness, or in doing absolutely nothing; five there, spent in idle or wicked conversation; and five there, in unnecessary attentions to our person or dress—how will the ghosts, as it

were, of these departed seasons, haunt and torture us! Though willing to give worlds to recall them—not only for the sake of our own souls, but for those of others—thousands of worlds cannot buy them. No, not one solitary five minutes. Happy is she who "wastes not," that she may "want not," here or hereafter.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOVE OF DOMESTIC CONCERNS.

Reasons for loving domestic life. 1. Young women should have some avocation. Labor regarded as drudgery. 2. Domestic employment healthy. 3. It is pleasant. 4. It affords leisure for intellectual improvement. 5. It is favorable to social improvement. 6. It is the employment assigned them by Divine Providence, and is eminently conducive to moral improvement. The moral lessons of domestic life. A well ordered home a miniature of heaven.

I HAVE incidentally made a few remarks on this subject elsewhere; but its importance demands a further and more attentive consideration.

There are numerous reasons which might be mentioned, why a young woman ought to cultivate a love of domestic life, and of domestic concerns; but I shall only advert to a few of them.

1. Every young woman should have some avocation, or calling. The Jews formerly had a proverb, that whoever of their sons was not

bred to a trade, was bred to the gallows; and both Mohammedans and Pagans have maxims among them which amount to the same thing. But is that which is so destructive to the character of young men—I mean the want of proper employment—entirely harmless to young women? It surely cannot be.

True it is, and deeply to be regretted, that there is a fashionable feeling abroad, which is the reverse of all this. Both men and women, in fashionable life, are apt to regard all labor—not only manual, but mental—as mere drudgery. They will labor, perhaps, if they cannot help it; but seldom, if they can. Or at least, this seems to be their feeling when they begin a course of industrious action. Some, it is confessed, finally become so much accustomed to action, that they continue it, either as a matter of mere habit, or because its discontinuance would now render them as miserable as they were in breaking up their natural indolence, and in forming their present industrious habits.

2. She should love the concerns and cares of domestic life, because no ordinary employment contributes more, on the whole, to female health.

I do not mean to say, that there is no other kind of employment which *could* be rendered equally healthy with doing house-work; but only that, as a whole, and especially in the present state of public sentiment, this is decidedly the best. Perhaps, in some circumstances, moderate labor—labor proportioned to her strength—in the field, or in the garden, might be healthier, were she trained to it; but as things and customs now are, this can hardly be done.

3. The employment is a pleasant one. It has at once all the advantages of a shelter from the severe cold of the winter, and of seclusion from the sultry sun of summer, and the storms of winter and summer both.* And not only is the house-keeper favored in these respects, but in many others. A pleasant, well ordered home, is perhaps the most perfect representation of the felicity of the heaven above, which the earth affords. At any rate, it is a source of very great happiness; and woman, when she is what

* Perhaps it may be said, that woman actually suffers more from the extremes of heat and cold, than man, notwithstanding her seclusion. This may be true; but I still think her constitution is not quite as liable to *injury* from the weather, as that of man; besides which, she is rather less liable to accidents.

she should be, is thus made a conspicuous agent in communicating that happiness.

Are not, then, home, and the domestic concerns of home, desirable? Are they not agreeable? Or if not, should not every young woman strive to make them so? How then does it happen that an idea of meanness is attached to them? How does it happen that almost every young woman who can, gets rid of them—as almost every young man does of farming and other manual labor.

4. Home affords to young women the means and opportunities of intellectual improvement. I do not mean to affirm, that the progress they can make in mere science, amid domestic concerns, will be quite as great in a given time—say one year—as it might be in many of our best schools. But I do mean to say, that it might be rapid enough for every practical purpose. I might say, also, that young women who study a little every day under the eye of a judicious mother, and teach that little to their brothers and sisters, will be more truly wise at the end of their pupilage, than they who only study books in the usual old fashioned—I might say, rather, new fashioned—manner. It is in

these circumstances more strikingly true than elsewhere, that

"Teaching, we give; and giving, we retain."

5. But once more. She who is employed in the domestic circle, is more favorably situated—I mean, if the domestic circle is what it should be—for social improvement, than she could be elsewhere. She may not, it is true, hold so much converse on the fashions—or be a means of inventing, or especially of retailing, so much petty scandal—as in some other situation, or in other circumstances. Still, the society of home will be better and more truly refined, than if it were more hollow, and affected, and insincere—in other words, made up of more fashionable materials. If to be fashionable is to distort nature as much as possible—and if the most fashionable society is that which is thus distorted in the highest degree—then it must be admitted that home cannot always be the best place for the education of young women.

6. But, lastly, young women should love domestic life, and the care and society of the young, because it is, without doubt, the intention of Divine Providence that they should do so; and because home, and the concerns of

home, afford the best opportunities and means of moral improvement.

The prerogative of woman—the peculiar province which God in nature has assigned her—has been already alluded to with sufficient distinctness. Let every reader, then, follow out the hint, and ask herself whether it is not important that she should love the place and circumstances thus assigned her; and whether she who hates them, is likely to derive from them the great moral lessons they are eminently designed to inculcate.

Is it asked what moral lessons, so mightily important, can be learned in the nursery and in the kitchen? In return, I may ask, what lessons of instruction are there which may *not* be learned there, and what moral virtues may not there be cultivated? Each family is a world in miniature; and all the necessary trials of the temper and of the character, are usually found within its circle.

Are we the slaves of appetite? Here is the place for learning the art of self-government. Are we fretful? Here we may learn patience: for a great fund of patience is often demanded; and the more so as we are apt, here, to be off our guard, and to yield to our unhappy feelings.

There are thousands who succeed very well in governing themselves—their temper and their passions—while the eye of the world is upon them, who, nevertheless, fail most culpably in this respect, when at home, secluded, as they seem to think themselves, from observation. Hence the importance of great effort to keep ourselves in subjection in these circumstances; and hence, too, the value of a well ordered and happy home.

Are we over-fond of excitement? Home is a sufficient cure for this—or may be made so to those who ardently desire that it should be. Are we desirous of forming our character upon the model of heaven? We are assured, from the Author of Holy Writ, that the kingdom of heaven consists in that simplicity, confidence, faith and love, which distinguish the child.

In short—to repeat the sentence—there is no place on earth so nearly resembling the heaven above, as a well ordered and happy family. If your lot is cast in such a family, young reader, be thankful for the favor, and strive to make the most of it. Not merely as a preparation for standing at the head of such a family yourself; not merely as a preparation for the work of teaching—although for this avoca-

tion I know of nothing better; not merely because it is your duty, and you feel that you *must* do it; but because it is for your happiness—yes, even for your life.

All character is formed in the school of trial; all good or valuable character, especially. And—I repeat the sentiment—in no place or department of this school are circumstances so favorable for such a purpose, as what may, emphatically, be termed the *home department*. The family and the church are God's own institutions. All else, is more or less of human origin: not, therefore, of necessity, useless—but more or less imperfect. She who would obey the will of God in forming herself according to the divine mode, must learn to value those institutions, in some measure, as they are valued by Him, and love them with a degree of the same love wherewith He loves them.

It will here be seen that I value domestic avocations so highly—giving them, as I do, the preference over all other female employments—not as an end, but as a means. It is because they secure, far better—other things being alike—the grand result at which every female should perpetually aim—the attainment of excellence. It is because they educate us far

better, physically, socially and morally—and with proper pains and right management, they might do so intellectually—than any other employment, for the great future, towards which we are every day hastening.

This home school is—after all which has been said of schools and education—not only the first and best school, especially for females, but emphatically *the* school. It is the nursery from which are to be transplanted, by and by, the plants which are to fill, and beautify, and perfect—if any perfection in the matter is attained—all our gardens and fields, and render them the fields and gardens of the Lord. Too much has not been—too much cannot be—said, it appears to me, in favor of this home department of female education—especially as a means of religious improvement.

Young women thus trained, would not only be most fitly prepared for the employment which, as a general rule, they are to follow for life, but for every other employment to which they can, in the good providence of God, ever be called. No matter what is to be their situation—no matter even if it is merely mechanical, as in some factory, or as an amanuensis—this apprenticeship in the family is not only highly

useful, but, as it seems to me, indispensable. Is not mind, and health, and self-government —yes, and self-knowledge, too—as indispensable to the individual who is confined to a bench or desk, as to any person who is more active? Nay, are they not even much more so—since sedentary employments have, in themselves, as respects mind and character, a downward, and narrowing, and contracting tendency?

CHAPTER XVII.

FRUGALITY AND ECONOMY.

Economy becoming old fashioned. The Creator's example. Frugality and economy should be early inculcated. Spending two pence to save one, not always wrong. Examples of disregarding economy. Wasting small things. Good habits as well as bad ones, go by companies. This chapter particularly necessary to the young. Frugality and economy of our grand-mothers.

Economy is another old fashioned word, which, like the thing for which it stands, is fast going into disrepute; and in these days, it will require no little moral courage in him who has any thing of reputation at stake, to commend it—and above all, to commend it to young women. What have they to do with economy? thousands might be disposed to ask, were the subject urged upon their attention.

"Is there not something connected with the idea of economy, which tends, necessarily, to narrow the mind and contract the heart?" This question, too, is often asked, even by those

whom age and experience should have taught better things.

I am pained to find the rising generation so prone to discard both frugality and economy, and to regard them as synonymous with narrowness, and meanness, and stinginess. There cannot possibly be a greater mistake.

May I not ask, without incurring the charge of irreverence, if there is any thing more obvious, in the works of the Creator, than his wonderful frugality and good economy? Where, in his domain, is any thing wasted? Where, indeed, is not every thing saved and appropriated to the best possible purpose? And will any one presume to regard his operations as narrow, or mean, or stingy?

What can be more abundant, for example, than air and water? Yet is there one particle too much of either of them? Is there one particle more than is just necessary to render the earth what it was designed to be? Such a thing may be said, I acknowledge, by the ignorant, and short-sighted, and incautious. They vent their occasional complaints, even against the Ruler of the skies, because the windows of heaven are, for a time, shut up, and the rain falls not; and yet these very persons are constrained

to admit, in their more sober moments, that all is ordered about right.

Be this as it may, however, there can be no doubt that a just measure of frugality and economy is a cardinal virtue, and should be early inculcated, even though it cost us some time and effort.

A great deal has been said, and no small number of words wasted, in endeavoring to show the folly of spending two pence to save one; whereas, to do so, in some circumstances, may be our highest wisdom. If it be important to learn the art of *saving*—the art of being *frugal*—then the art should be acquired, even if it costs something in the acquisition. No one thinks of reaping the full reward of adult labor in any occupation, the moment he begins to put his hand to it, as a mere apprentice. Does he not thus, in learning his occupation or trade—especially during the first years—spend two pence to save one? Does not all preparation for the future, obviously involve the same necessity?

I do not, certainly, undertake to say that it is always proper—or indeed that it is often so—to spend more, in order to save less. I only contend that it is sometimes so; and that to do

so, may not only be a matter of propriety, but also a duty.

Let me give an example. Young women are sometimes apt to acquire a habit of being wasteful in regard to small things, such as pins, needles, &c. Yet, to teach them, in these days of refinement, always to pick up pins when they see them lying before them on the floor or elsewhere, and put them into a pin-cushion, or in some suitable place, would no doubt be considered as quite unreasonable.

But would not such a habit be exceedingly useful? Am I to be told that it would be a great waste, since the value of the time consumed in thus picking up pins and needles, would be more than twice the value of the articles saved? Am I to be told that this is not only spending two pence to save one, but that it is actually wicked? If so, by what art shall a wasteful young woman be taught good habits?

I would certainly urge a young girl who was careless about pins, needles, &c., to form the habit of picking up every one she found. I would do so, to prevent her prodigal habits from extending to other matters, and affecting and injuring her whole character. But I would

also do so, to cure the bad habit already existing. More than even this; I advise every young woman who finds herself addicted to habits which are opposed to a just frugality and economy, to begin the work of eradicating them, without waiting for the promptings of her mother and friends. Nor let her, for a moment, fear the imputation of meanness; it is sufficient for her that she is doing what she knows to be right.

Good habits, as well as bad ones, like virtues and vices, are apt to go in company. If one is allowed, others are apt to follow. First, those most nearly related; next, those more remotely so; and finally, perhaps, the whole company.

I would not dwell long on a subject like this, in a book for young women, were I not assured that the case requires it. I see young women every where, especially among the middling and higher classes, and in great numbers too, exceedingly improvident; and not a few of them, wasteful. The world seems to be regarded as a great store-house which can never be exhausted, let them be as extravagant as they may. They forget, entirely, the vulgar but correct adage, that "always taking out of the meal

tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom"—and seem to take it for granted there is no bottom to their resources.

Our grand-mothers—our great grand-mothers, rather—were not ashamed of frugality or economy. They were neither afraid nor unwilling to do what they knew to be right, simply because it happened to be unfashionable. I am not, indeed, either constitutionally or by age, one of those who place the golden age exclusively in the past. I can see errors in the conduct of our grand-mothers. But I also see in them excellencies; many virtues of the sterner, more sober sort, which have been bartered for modern customs—not to say vices—at a very great loss by the exchange. What we have thus lost, I should be glad, were it possible, to restore

CHAPTER XVIII.

SYSTEM.

General neglect of system in families. Successful efforts of a few schools. Why the effects they produce are not permanent. Importance of right education. Here and there system may be found. Blessedness of having a mother who is systematic. Let no person ever despair of reformation. How to begin the work.

THERE is hardly any thing which the majority of our young women hate—frugality and economy, and the study of themselves, perhaps, excepted—so much as *system*. In this respect a few of our best schools have, within a few years, attempted something; and, in a few instances, with success. I could mention several schools for females, whose teachers have done much more good by the habits of order and system they have inculcated and endeavored to form, than by the sciences they have taught.

The tendency of this excellent feature of a few of our institutions is, however, pretty

effectually counteracted by the general feeling of the public, that the school is but a place of painful though necessary restraint; and that when it is over, study is over—and with it, all the system which had been either inculcated or practised. And though not a few who have been thus compelled to live by system, for two or three years, see plainly its excellent effects, and both they and their parents acknowledge them, still the school is no sooner terminated, than every thing of the kind is very likely to become as though it had never been.

So long, however, as home is home, and all the associations therewith are as delightful as they now are—and so long as the greater number of our families live at random, regarding order as constraint, and method and system as slavery—just so long will the feelings of the young of each rising generation, revolt at every thing like order and system; and though for the sake of peace, as well as other and various reasons, they may be willing to conform to both, for a time, yet will they sigh, internally, for the hour when their bondage shall cease, and the day of their emancipation arrive. It is not in human nature, to look back to the scenes, and customs, and methods—if methods they deserve

to be called, where all is at random—of early life, without a fondness for, and an inward desire to return to them; and there are few so hardened as not to do it whenever an opportunity occurs. How important, then—how supremely so—is right education! How important to sow, in the earliest years, the seeds of a love of order and system! How important to young women, especially, that this work should not be deferred; since if it is so, it is most likely to be deferred forever.

I know, full well, that here and there a housekeeper, convinced in her conscience that she can do vastly more for herself and others, as well as do it better, by means of system, than without it, attempts something like innovation upon the usual random course which prevails about her. She resolves to have her hours of labor, her hours of recreation, and her hours of reading and visiting. She believes life is long enough for all the purposes of life. She is resolved to be systematic on Sabbath and on week days; in the common details of the family; in dress; and in regard to the hours of rising, meals and rest. But she has a herculean task to accomplish—no small part of which is, to bring her husband and the other members of

her family to co-operate with her. Yet, amid every discouragement, she perseveres, and at length succeeds. Is not such a victory worth securing?

Let the young woman who has such a person as I have just described, for her mother, rejoice in it. She can never be too grateful, not only to her mother, but to God. Her life is likely to be of thrice the usual value. Our daughters who are blessed with such mothers, may become as polished corner stones in a temple—worthy of themselves, of those who educate them, and of God.

But let not those who have been less fortunate, in respect to maternal training and influence, utterly despair. Convinced of the general correctness of the views here advanced, and desirous of entering on the work of reform, let them take courage, and begin it immediately. Though the mother, by her influence in the early formation of character, is almost omnipotent, she is not quite so. Though the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, still it is not utterly impossible for those to do well who have been long accustomed to do evil. "What has been done," you know, "*can* be done." Make this maxim your motto,

and go forward in the work of self-education. But remember to begin, in the first place, with the smaller matters of life; and to conquer in one point or place of action, before you begin with another. And, lastly, remember not to rely wholly on your own strength. You are, indeed, to work—and to work with all your might; but it is always God that worketh in you, when any thing effectual is accomplished, in the way of improvement.

CHAPTER XIX.

PUNCTUALITY.

Evil of being one minute too late. Examples to illustrate the importance of punctuality. Case of a mother at Lowell. Her adventure. General habits which led to such a disaster. Condition of a family trained to despise punctuality.

No system can be carried on without both order and punctuality. I have already said something, incidentally, on both of these topics; but their importance entitles them to a separate consideration.

The importance of strict punctuality could be shown by appealing to hundreds of authorities; but I prefer an appeal to the good sense of my readers.

How painful it is, in a thousand instances of life, to be but one minute too late; and how much evil it may, indeed, often does occasion, both to ourselves and others!

"Think of the difference," says a spirited writer, "between arriving with a letter one

minute before the post-office is closed, and arriving one minute after; between being at the stage-office a quarter of an hour too soon, and reaching there a quarter of an hour too late; between shaking a friend heartily by the hand as he steps on board his vessel bound to the Indies, and arriving at the pier when the vessel is under weigh, and stretching her wide canvass to the winds! Think of this, and a thousand such instances, and be determined, through life, to be in time."

Allow me to illustrate the important subject of which I am now treating, by the case of a young mother. She wishes to go from Boston to Lowell. She leaves Boston in the cars which go at eleven, and reach Lowell soon after twelve. She goes to spend the afternoon with a sick friend there, resolving to return at five—the hour when the last cars leave Lowell for Boston. Her infant is left, for the time, in the hands of a maiden sister—the husband being engaged in his shop, and hardly knowing of her departure.

She spends the afternoon with her friend, and her services are very acceptable. But ere she is aware, the bell at the railroad depot rings for passengers to Boston. A few moments are spent in getting ready and in exchanging the